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OBSERVATIONS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS;

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

SUNDRY REMARKS

On the late Publications of Dr. BL—IR, and
other Authors in the City of CORK.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By JAMES POULSON.

Prove all Things, 1 THESS. V. 21.

VOL. I.

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OBSERVATIONS

VARIOUS SUBJECTS

BY J. R. MARKS

On the late Propositions of Dr. T. ... and ...
... in the ...



BY JAMES ...

... ..

(Price ...)

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
JOHN De COURCY
LORD BARON
KINGSALE.

My LORD,

THE example of a *shining light* and an accomplished pen-man, in his address to most excellent *Theophilus* on a sacred occasion, emboldens me to dedicate to your Lordship the ensuing pages, which are the product of many a delightful hour of serious meditation, on the rising hills and solitary plains in this kingdom.

When the ensuing observations first proceeded from my pen, they were attended with additional circumstances of real pleasure, dissipating a multiplicity of pensive thoughts from my mind, and though I feel a kind of diffidence in submitting the ensuing Observations to the judgment of the publick, yet as they are chiefly calculated to improve the mind and to promote christianity, I

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A

persuade

ii DEDICATION.

persuade myself the work will meet your noble acceptance on that account.

The countenance you have given to compositions of a religious nature, together with the many personal favours which I have received from your Lordship, are powerful inducements to make me solicitous to have the following work appear under your patronage, which, by your Lordship's permission, I commit to your protection with the most affectionate gratitude. I have endeavoured, as much as possible, to preserve the ideas of dignity without the tincture of vanity or fondness of applause, which I know you are as solicitous to shun, as you are assiduous to merit; and it gives me pleasure in the thought of being known to those into whose hands these may come, as one whom your Lordship has honoured with your friendship and approbation.

I need not inform you that the privileges and advantages of Christianity are supremely excellent, and infinitely more durable than all others: This inestimable blessing you possess, and I am fully persuaded, however different the sentiments of many may be as to the doctrines contained in the ensuing work, they are exactly agreeable to your religious principles, and your steady attachment to those doctrines, your pious and uniform zeal, your illustrious example, and

humble

D E D I C A T I O N. iii

humble deportment, is a prevailing evidence of your unfeigned regard for pure and undefiled religion, and a powerful incitement to others to tread in the same steps, and to follow the same rule.

But I must forbear, lest I should give occasion for suspicion of vain flattery: What I have already advanced, may serve for a sufficient reason why I covet to prefix this work to your Lordship's respectable name: And as it is impossible for me to wish you a richer blessing or a greater happiness; may the Supreme God, in whom the Gentiles trust, bless you and your's with all spiritual blessings in Christ, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Influenced by such a sacred principle, may your Lordship persevere, under the favourable protection of the most High, that when you shall be called to resign your exalted and honourable Titles to the heir of your virtues, your illustrious name may ever live, and leave behind you in the records of *De Courcy*, and in the annals of *Ireland*, the distinguished honours of such an example, as nations yet unborn shall read with pleasure, is the desire of,

My LORD,

Reprinted at
Belfast

Dec. 1776.

Your LORDSHIPS

Most obedient and

Most Humble Servant

JAMES POULSON.

DEDICATION

humble dependence is a prevailing evidence
of your interest, regard for him, and un-
derstanding, and a powerful instrument
in leading to the knowledge of the truth, and to
the love of the Father.
But I must repeat, that I should give oc-
casion for the suspicion of vain glory; which
I have already advanced, may derive for a
testimony, which I could not give, that
work to your Lordship's religious name.
And as it is impossible for me to will, you a
higher blessing of a greater happiness; may the
Almighty God, in whom all virtues truly
dwell, you and yours with all spiritual bless-
ings in Christ, and give you an inheritance
among those that are sanctified. Influenced
by such a sacred principle, may your Lord-
ship persevere, under the favorable protec-
tion of the most High, that when you shall
be called to resign your earthly and tempo-
rable Ties to the care of your virtues, your
illustrious name may ever live, and leave be-
hind you in the records of the Church, and in
the minds of the faithful, the distinguished mem-
ory of such an example, as a pattern yet re-
born shall read with pleasure, as the desire of

My Lord,
Respectfully,
Your Lordship's
Most obedient and
Most humble servant
Dec. 1776
JAMES BOULSON

P R E F A C E.

IN all probability the reader will expect that I give some account of the following sheets, which now make their appearance from the Press in the North of Ireland. I must confess, that flatteries, modes and forms, and apologies paid to fellow worms upon like occasions are tiresome to me. The principal points treated in the ensuing pages, are some of the most essential doctrines of the reformation; which are the glory of the Christian world; and I have endeavoured through the whole of the work to follow the scripture rule. This has been my guide.

The first part of the ensuing work has already appeared from the Press, and has been honoured with some degree of success; and though I have made many alterations in the present work, yet the subjects are the same; neither am I altogether without some hopes, that this feeble attempt to advance the Redeemers glory in the church below, may be crowned with success: Though it may not afford the most exalted gratification to the gay and fashionable world; it may both edify and delight others of a spiritual and more refined genius.

The only favour that I would solicit of my readers is, that they may peruse the ensuing sheets with candour; and compare my Observations with the infallible standard of eternal truth; and if they bear the stamp of the holy Bible, and paint the wonders of immortal truth in lively and striking colours, I persuade myself the discerning reader will not reject

vi P R E F A C E.

ject the composition upon that account. I know the grave and sublime subjects defended in this work, are the shining ornaments of many a rich library; which affords serious entertainment for a leisure hour, to those who have a relish for Divine literature; who are formed for an infinite and unchangeable felicity.

But these invaluable truths will not afford any refined pleasure to persons of an unenlightened mind; neither can they discern any distinguishing beauty in holiness; they care not for these things; they indulge themselves in the little gaieties of time, and the thoughtless series of diversions; they give the preference by far to their favourite amusements, and neglect the great things which concern their eternal welfare.

For my part, I have not the vanity to expect the ensuing pages will meet the approbation of this polite age, neither do I imagine that I shall escape the censure of the critic; especially at this unpropitious period of disputation. All my hope and wishes are, though the work may not be excellent, that it may be useful. I acknowledge I have not copied after the learned Philosophers in my enquiry after truth; neither indeed do I imagine that the Greek Philosophers, with all their attainments, ever attained to the knowledge of the true God; indeed it is certain they did not; for professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and fell into gross idolatry, with the ignorant and vulgar; changing the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man; so that the learned world by wisdom knew not God. I have therefore made choice of a different path, wherein, I presume, the just will readily follow me; and though my pages are not embellished with
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the shining ornaments of Latin, Greek and Hebrew; though I have not used the excellency of speech of man's wisdom to illustrate the charming glories of the gospel; it will suffice the discerning reader that I have used the words of truth and soberness, which I think is the happiest and noblest language in which we can discover our exalted sentiments of revealed religion.

And though there is not that dignity of thought, that delightful turn of mind, that liveliness of imagination, and that which the nature of such a work requires: Though I cannot entertain my readers with that sublimity and delicacy of language, which adorns every page of the writings of the learned and pious Mr. Hervey; neither have I the vanity to affect any resemblance of that inimitable pen-man, who was the brightest genius of many ages; nevertheless, according to my abilities, I tread in the same steps, I speak the same things, I follow the same rule: If my language differs from his, my sentiments; as to the grand essentials of Christianity, are the same: If our materials vary, they run into the same mould; and center in the same grand object; the same Lord, the same Spirit, the same common Faith: And though he lives no longer, yet his pious name, and his evangelical writings, will live, and be had in remembrance in the churches of Jesus, to the latest generations.

What success this work will meet with in the North of Ireland, time only must determine. I can only say, that I have engaged in this employ, with a sincere unprejudiced desire to discover truth to my readers, and I have endeavoured as much as possible, to avoid giving offence either to Jew or Gentile, without deviating from the sacred oracles

of the living God. And if these Observations should cast the least dawn of light upon the dim understandings of any. If this feeble attempt, under the Divine blessing, should be a means of giving the everlasting truths of the Gospel a recommending aspect to persons of manifold denominations. If any by this means, should be brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; such a testimony, not from the voice of fame, but from the judicious reader, would be a pleasing recompence of reward to the Author, and afford him a reflection superior to any earthly good.

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OBSERVATIONS, &c.

SECT. I.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is with some kind of reluctance, that I discover my religious sentiments in a way of disputation. I have often signified my disapprobation of controversial points; and I had much rather retire from the lists of disputation; but as necessity is laid upon me by the friends of truth; I have consented to offer my thoughts from the Press, in favour of sundry grand essential doctrines of revealed religion, which has been treated with indignity and contempt in a late publication, which made its appearance from the Press in the city of Cork, entitled "Thoughts on Nature and Religion, or an apology for the Right of private judgment" by Dr. Blair.

To gratify persons of inquisitive dispositions, I shall give a sketch of the Doctor's mischievous principles, and give them a specimen of the manner how he acquits himself in that iniquitous composition, which has given so much offence

fence to persons of refinement in the southern part of this kingdom; in particular, as the Doctor is a person of a liberal and polite education, ~~and endowee with the shining talents of human~~ literature; with those fine accomplishments he has executed his proposals. As to the latter; in a pleasing correct stile, he has discovered the situation of his thoughts with elevated language. He seems to paint destruction gay, and paves with seeming beauty the broad road to eternal ruin; on which account his production has been the more mischievous in its influence; strikes the sense the surer, and sinks the deeper into the minds of the unwary.

In the introduction of his Apology for the right of private judgment, he has discovered the author of genius: He speaks so much, and some things so sensibly, of Nature and Religion, and of the imperfection of human knowledge, and of the mistakes all men are liable to, that in fact I was almost prejudiced in his favour, and was tempted to suspect that the evil report which prevailed against his composition, was chiefly owing to prejudice or difference in sentiments. Perhaps, thought I, it may be owing to some unguarded expressions, or otherwise to a mistake in the Printer; for I have frequently suffered censure myself through a mistake of this nature, and particularly in a late publication of my Sermons printed in Belfast, by a transposition of the 17th and 18th pages, in the room of the 19th and 20th. I considered the Dr. as liable to the same. I therefore examined his errata with due inspection, willing to admit some of these extenuating circumstances: But when I came to look further into the work, I beheld a
strange

strange variety of dangerous tenets, which the man of wisdom would ever wish to deprecate, and which, I am sorry to observe, has since proved very pernicious, not only tainting the minds of the unthinking many, but also corrupting their morals; opening a door to all manner of licentious practices, and instead of cultivating a sacred principle and promoting an excellent practice, it is the bane of both, which must be offensive to persons of a religious cast.

To stand neuter or silent at such an unhappy period, would argue an instance of criminal remissness, rather than of christian moderation. Therefore I the more readily stand forth to discharge my obligation, and the more especially as I was suspected of being the Author of that scene of error; and it was with the utmost difficulty I escaped the violence of the offended multitude in Tralee in the County of Kerry.

I confess it is with regret I mention, that the fine talents of the Editor, has the unhappy tendency to exclude the Almighty Saviour from all the operations of the Divine nature; to rob him of his eternal power and Godhead, and reduce him to the meanness of a creature. I could easily bear with the Doctor's weakness in some things, and readily excuse him for being a little inconsistent with himself in circumstantial in religion, seeing the best of writers are liable to mistakes; but when I perceived him openly and maliciously exert his mischievous influence to pervert and destroy the doctrine of *Original Sin*: When he leveled his poisonous dart against the doctrine of Divine revelation, denying the immortality of the soul: I could no longer bear with the Doctor's daring insults,

nor

nor give place to his encroachments, but withstood them with firm resolution and zeal.

For my part, I feel a kind of reluctance in being severe, but I can hardly forbear censuring the Doctor's infidelity; that he should prostitute such fine talents, to the base and cruel purposes of promoting licentiousness both in principle and manners. It is true, he pleads so strongly in behalf of moderation in his first publication; and he intercedes so sensibly for candour in his last supplement, that it would be ungenerous to be severe upon him; but it will appear to every impartial reader that he has not laid himself open both to controversy and severe censure. I shall, as much as possible avoid the latter, and give my readers a specimen of the particular subjects contained in the Doctor's composition, which has incurred the displeasure of many. viz.

Original Sin.

The Immortality of the Soul.

The Divinity of Christ.

S E C T. II.

OBSERVATIONS ON ORIGINAL SIN.

THE Dr. asserts "that *Original Sin* chiefly consists in *Eve's* desire to know Adam, and his gratifying her desire" a pretty device, to blind the minds of the unthinking many. If the Dr. was a stranger to a liberal and polite education, I should not much wonder at his indelicate mode of writing; and if the reader chooses to give himself the trouble to consult the Doctor's

tor's unchaste sentiments on this subject, he may see them at large in his composition, pages 40 to 43, which modesty obliges me to omit transcribing, and which ought not to be once mentioned among Christians. How the Dr. can thus demean himself, or suffer such evil communication to proceed from his pen, I cannot conceive. If he had a proper idea of the divine article under consideration, I am fully persuaded he would not thus eclipse the glory of his pen, nor so grievously debase one of the first principles of the oracles of Heaven. Whatever the Dr. may imagine, sure I am, that his ridiculous flights of wanton imagination on this sublime subject, cannot be admitted with any degree of decency by persons of refinement; such impure principles are no inconsiderable blemishes in his writings, and will appear conspicuous in the roll of errors to his great dishonour.

As the Dr. seems a perfect stranger to the nature of *Original Sin*, I would advise him to consult the sacred writings, and if he should be inclined to examine the sacred history in favour of this Divine article, in all probability he will see reason to acknowledge the impropriety of his sentiments, and retract them openly. Let the Dr. consider, that *Original Sin* consists in the disobedience of our first Parents in eating of the forbidden fruit. This was the sin which involved Adam and all his posterity into a state of unutterable misery, and is therefore called by the early Fathers "Unspeakable in its greatness" It is one of the first principles of the oracles of Heaven, not extracted from the writings of either *Tully*, *Virgil* or *Seneca*, nor from the traditions of the Fathers, but from the records of Heaven; it is the

the standard of orthodoxy, and the invariable doctrine of the Holy Bible. The same vein of evangelical doctrine runs through all the book of God. To this distinguishing article of Christianity, gave all the Prophets and Apostles witness, and it was the doctrine of Christ himself, who cannot mistake, nevertheless how few are there who acknowledge it, and how many deny it; but to me it appears of all others the most significant and approved doctrine, therefore it must be the most desirable. It is the invariable doctrine of the *Established Church* Art. 9, and the avowed belief of her most eminent Divines; and is also a favourite article with our *Westminster Divines*. These are my authorities in favour of the doctrine under consideration, attestations which gives the highest dignity to the sentiment. If the serious unprejudiced reader will consider all these Divine authorities together, I hope they will convince him of the reality of the doctrine of *Original Sin*, which is so clearly and so copiously revealed in the Divine word. But alas! how difficult is it to bring men to acknowledge it, and with what reluctance are they brought to confess it, until the eyes of their understandings are opened, whereby they perceive the depravity of their fallen nature: Then, and not till then, will they acknowledge that they *were born in sin*, and that sin has abounded in them, in their hearts and in their lives, from their youth. This is a very humbling, but it is a real view of human nature, and we need not go back to distant ages, nor unfold the records of eternity to prove this doctrine; we have it near at hand, if men's pride and ignorance would suffer them to see it; but sin has so blind-

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ed the understandings of men, and depraved their judgments, that they will not assent to what is revealed in the infallible Scriptures of truth. I have often wondered to see ministers weary themselves in concerting measures to destroy this *Article* of our Christian faith, which was *delivered to the saints* more than seventeen hundred years ago, without bestowing one single hour in searching the records of eternal truth, to see whether it be of Divine authority or not. For my part I do assure the reader, it is not a fondness for disputing, but a disinterested regard for truth, constrains me to contend earnestly for it, and what there is offensive to the strictest modesty in the doctrine of *Original Sin*, I cannot conceive. Does it offer any injury to the nature or character of fallen man, or does it mislead and deceive men? by no means. If it informs them of their disease, it points to the only remedy. But the Dr. imagines that it betrays a want of moral excellency to acknowledge the depravity of human nature. But I think the Dr. is greatly mistaken; for the doctrine of *Original Sin* is the genuine sense of the Scriptures; it is the sum and substance of their Heavenly message; we have not only *two or three*, but have a cloud of witnesses in the sacred Oracles. The proofs are almost innumerable, and pour in their evidence from every quotation. I would gladly invite the reader's attention to that form of found words contained in that memorable passage Psalm li. 5. *Behold, said that divine Philosopher David, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* This is the report made of human nature, by a man after God's own heart; and however disgusting

gusting the declaration may appear to persons of a different turn of mind, it is a true and faithful saying, and we have the same testimony confirmed by a higher than *David*; by the infinitely wise Observer himself. *They are altogether become filthy* Psalm xiv. 3. This is a sad but a certain truth, that should never depart from the Doctor's memory, nor ever be omitted in any of our confessions; and suppose there was no original guilt; is there not actual transgression enough in the best of men, to stain their pride and fill them with shame? I persuade myself, those who are acquainted with the sinful perverseness of their depraved nature will acknowledge, that a sinful disposition is as early as their existence; and, that they are transgressors from the womb, therefore it is called the sin of our nature, because it comes into the world with us; and we may trace its original from Adam's transgression; so that the very mould into which our faculties are cast, prove us perverse by nature. And is it not the language of the believer's experience, that the contagion has spread itself through the whole man, so that not only the words of his mouth, but the meditations of his heart are evil, and that continually. Agreeable to this doctrine is the 9th Article of the established church-----“*There is no health in us*” a metaphor taken from a distempered body, in which the *whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint* Isa. i. 5. And if the disputants against this doctrine would examine the oracles of Heaven with an unprejudiced mind, they would soon perceive the crimson stain, has so deeply tainted their nature, that the waters of the universal deluge can never purge it away, and such

such is the malignant nature of Original Sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it; that it will yield to nothing but to the *precious blood of Christ*, to the *sacrificial blood* of the Lamb, to that fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness; and this is the ruined state of all mankind by nature; whether they perceive it or not; and nothing could possibly affect their recovery but the inestimable ransom paid to deliver them from the depths of misery, and the influence of Divine grace in due time to sanctify and raise them to the summit of glory.

This doctrine, instead of striking terror to the minds of men, or instead of dispiriting any of the disciples of Jesus, is full of Divine consolation to ruined heavy laden sinners, and is a most powerful incentive to a holy detestation of sin, and a godly sorrow for it; and I am fully persuaded, if the advocates for the powers of fallen reason, who expect to merit the Divine favour, by a conformity to the rules of natural religion, were once brought to the knowledge of their original impurity, they would never more open their mouths to extol human nature, nor glory in their own attainments, but own, with humble shame, their guilt and their unworthiness; in imitation of an evangelical Prophet, Isa. vi. 5.

For my part, I don't wonder that this evangelical doctrine meets so much opposition from the carnal world, for it is as far above their comprehension, as the Heavens are above the earth, and directly opposite to the carnal mind. It strikes at the very root of human pride, and cuts assunder the very sinews of every lofty imagination, and if it was not one of the foun-

vation truths of God, which is secured amongst his hid treasures, it would have been destroyed long ago, by the many powerful adversaries who have risen up against it. But alas, what can mortals do; what can nothingness and vanity do; Can they stand before consuming fire? No more can they destroy this *divine article*, which shall stand, while eternal ages roll away.

I wish the inquisitive reader would lend his attention for a few moments, if he has leisure, and take a view of the description given of man in his native state, by one of the ablest ministers of the New Testament, a writer of the first distinction, and of the finest discernment, on whose judgment we may safely rely. Nothing, I think, can create a juster idea of fallen man than the whole chapter from whence I derive my information, Rom. iii.

The author of this epistle was once as proud a boaster of human nature as any; he was zealous for the traditions of his fathers, and went about to establish his own righteousness in opposition to that of Jesus.-----But when he was convinced of his mistaken apprehensions of human nature; when he was brought to his right mind; when he was under the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and favoured with clear manifestations of Divine truth. Under those sublime revelations of the glory of Christ; the depravity of his nature and the impurity of his heart were not only apparent, but glaring, and overwhelmed him with self-abasement. When once that Divine scholar saw himself overspread with an inherent depravity, he could not forbear crying out "*O wretched man that I am, &c.*" Not that he was wretched in his personal character,

ter, or defiled with any abominable pollutions, for he was now a preacher of righteousness, and a saint of the most distinguished lustre. But the eyes of his understanding being opened by the influence of the Divine spirit, he saw the King, the Lord of hosts; and a view of his natural state, with a clear discovery of the Divine law, astonished that divine philosopher. He was struck with amazement at the misapprehensions that he once formed of the dignity of human nature, and readily acknowledges that it was all owing to ignorance and unbelief. It would be well if the disputants of this doctrine were made thus sensible of their ignorance and unbelief; if they were, they would readily go and do as Paul did-----When grace had well refin'd his heart, his tongue was like the pen of a ready writer. When he was made sensible of the miserable state of man by nature; having the tongue of the learned, he proceeds to give the following description.

There is none righteous, no not one.----There is none that understandeth.-----There is none that seeketh after God.----They are all gone out of the way.----There is none that doeth good, no not one.----Their throat is an open sepulchre.----With their tongues they have used deceit.----The poison of asps is under their lips.-----Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.----Their feet are swift to shed blood.----Destruction and misery are in their ways.----And the way of peace they have not known.----There is no fear of God before their eyes.----

Is this man's real character, and the state of all mankind by nature; how sad their state by nature is-----Where then is boasting, is it not

for ever excluded? If all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, is not every mouth stopped? Are not the adversaries of this doctrine obliged to acknowledge, that shame and confusion belongs to them that are sinful?

- Let the candid reader indulge a serious pause for a few moments, and reflect on the fore-cited description, which lies within the reach of every discerning reader, and I persuade myself, upon a close reflection, the judicious reader will see abundant reason for the most unrepachable among men to be ashamed at the remembrance of their extreme meanness and depravity by nature, rather than entertain one conceited apprehension of human dignity or glory in their own performances.

But this disparaging description is not intended to discredit the qualifications of the righteous, nor as an open rebuke to the specious hypocrite, who is precise in the form, but destitute of the power of religion. Neither can it be confined to the wicked and prophane; but the description is designed to set forth the state of all mankind by nature, to stain the pride of man, that no flesh should glory in the Divine presence. And we cannot imagine that the sacred Oracles misrepresent fallen man, when they describe him as *filthy* and *abominable*. Let us turn our eyes which way we will, we shall see matters of fact to prove it, and experience demonstrates, that the corruption of our fallen nature is the cause of all the impurity of our affections; and if this were not the proper character of fallen man, what reason can be assigned why the scriptures pour so much contempt upon human nature, and describe the whole

whole race of man *as drinking in iniquity like water*, deceitful, and desperately wicked. Abasing characters! enough to stain all human pride. Whereas if man were by nature pure, and as perfectly innocent as Adam was, in a state of innocency, if this had been the exalted situation of the sons of men, when the most High condescended to take cognizance of them, to see if there were any that did understand or seek after God, surely the most High would readily have proclaimed them *altogether pure and upright*, that there were none of the human race inclined to evil; *no not one*. But the description given of man, both in the Old and New Testaments are quite the reverse, Psalm liii. 2, 3. Job xv. 16. Rom. iii. 23. and I see no reason to question the Divine veracity.

Perhaps some of my readers may think me tedious on this important subject; that I speak too diminutively of human reason. I own my observations in favour of this *antient doctrine* may differ from the generality of our new schemes of divinity, for they are written in the style of what many call *old divinity*, and indeed the doctrine of Original Sin, is as old as the creation; we may trace it from the ancient scriptures, from whence I derive all my observations. But I find there are a set of men in our age, more liberal in their sentiments, and of superior discernment in their own esteem to the inspired writers; who deny this doctrine, and assiduously propagate another gospel, extolling the dignity of human nature; a doctrine never taught by any of the Prophets, nor once mentioned by any of the inspired Apostles; and it is astonishing to think what

wretched shifts those men make for want of a new Bible to accomplish their evil design.

That God created man upright after his own image, and implanted in him *inferior* principles of nature, such as are common to men, and invested him with *superiour* principles of grace and holiness, spiritual, holy and divine; this I readily admit, otherwise man must be without any such thing as inclination or will; but man, vain man, sinful man, being invested with honour, abode not. Bright as his rising was, he soon set in dismal darkness, which covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. He soon fell from that state of innocence in which he was created, and thereby involved himself and his whole posterity into a state of unutterable misery; and in order to bring this important truth home to the readers understanding, I beg leave to invite his attention to the unerring testimony given by one of the chiefest Apostles.-----*By the offence of one, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*-----One would think it was impossible for the attentive reader, after such clear incontestible proofs in favour of this doctrine, evermore to reject or deny it----When Adam disobeyed the Divine law, he fled from the presence of his Maker, fell under the Divine resentment, lost communion with God, and he sustained the loss of his innocence, and original righteousness together. In consequence of which, the holy spirit, that divine inhabitant, departed from him, and he fell into the horrible pit of corrupt nature, and spiritual death instantly took place. Thus Adam's nature became impure by his own free will, and all his descendants became sinful through

through his disobedience imputed to them, the same way as Christ's seed are made righteous through his righteousness imputed to them.-----

Thus I have given the reader some information how all the posterity of Adam become guilty before God, and instead of being pure or free from sinful dispositions, they are dead in trespasses and sin, in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity; and the elect of God, though they are *chosen* in Christ, and *given* to him, though they are *preserved* in him, and *united* to him, though they are *accepted* in the beloved, and *complete* in him, and represented by him.

-----These also fell in Adam into the corruption of human nature, and are by nature children of wrath even as others for a time; nevertheless they were preserved in Christ with a secret preservation from everlasting, Jude i. and even in the fall they were preserved from falling into a state of final condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. from the second death, and from falling irrecoverably; and in due time, according to his eternal purpose, he calls them by his grace out of darkness into his marvellous light, and he will preserve them amidst all the changing scenes of life, and at last present them faultless before the presence of his Father's glory, with exceeding joy.-----To his doctrine gave all the Prophets and Apostles witness, so that if there be no truth in it, there is no truth in the scriptures.

Let the Scribes of our age try their skill with this doctrine, I mean the disputants of this world, who arrogate to themselves the title of free-thinkers; let them produce, if they can, one single instance of the dignity of human nature.

I have conversed with many persons of merit, some of the principal speakers in favour of *free-will*. I have read every publication that I could obtain in defence of it; but alas, they are all at a loss to prove the point. And if man comes into the world with all those noble faculties which they so much boast of, how comes it to pass, that so many evil habits appear so early in the *infant race*? Don't they imbibe *pride* and *passion* almost as soon as their young pulses begin to beat? As soon as they are born, says a divine historian, they go astray; and if this propensity to evil be observable in all children; From whence do they derive the unhappy bias? -----Is it from their parents, or from their *tutors*? We frequently behold their angry passions swell and rise, and their little hands lifted up ready to tear each others eyes. From whence do those evil dispositions proceed; can we suppose they catch the diffusive habit, from the example of others?-----How comes it to pass that lying and evil speaking appear in them so early, long before they have had an opportunity to fix these evil habits in their hearts, by custom in actual transgression? All this cannot be owing to an irregular education, but rather to a principle of internal depravity. The seeds of iniquity are within them from their youth, I had almost said from their first formation in the womb.-----*I was shapen in iniquity*, said a shining light, who now makes a considerable figure in the courts above.

And suppose there was a disposition in man naturally to choose things that are excellent, and refuse things that are sinful, how comes it to pass that men choose the broad road that leads
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to eternal ruin, and refuse the narrow path that leads to eternal life? how blind must men be to their eternal interest, nay how stupid and ignorant must they be who choose death rather than life. Is not this a plain demonstration of the corruption and depravity of human nature? If fallen man be not corrupted with sin, how comes it to pass that they are so frequently hurried away by their lusts into a thousand strange irregularities, which are deplorably evil in themselves, and often attended with fatal consequences?---Whence proceed those evil passions, and vile affections, which rule and reign in the children of disobedience, and which often hurries men to prisons; and sometimes to death. How comes it to pass that all mankind, by nature, are enemies to God by wicked works? From whence proceeds that hardness of heart and that blindness of mind, that impiety and infidelity which so much abounds; what can those things be owing to, but human folly? *From whence come wars and fightings among you; come they not hence,* says the Apostle, *don't they proceed from the same corrupt fountain.* Surely if the fountain be polluted, the stream must needs be impure.---O the innumerable evils that man is fallen into by original apostacy, and the many sorrowful effects which proceed from that single cause; and this hereditary defilement has tainted not a few only, of the sons of men, but all without exception, the sinful leprosy has tainted all the descendants of the fallen race of Adam. According to the 9th Article of the established church, "*Original Sin is the fault and corruption of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam.*" So that Adam's disobedience
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ence has been the bane of our nature, and would have plunged our better part into eternal perdition, had not an able sufficient Redeemer interposed, and given himself a ransom for his many.

And if there be any dispositions of grace and holiness in man by nature, where may we expect to find those traces of the Divine image? Suppose we examine the *understanding*, that sublime faculty of the soul, which first presents itself to our observation. Perhaps some pious reader may fondly hope to find some divine disposition make its appearance there; but alas, 'tis all in vain. We may as well expect to strike fire out of ice, as expect an holy disposition in the *human understanding*. It cannot be, for it is both darkened and depraved also. And according to the Apostles description, nothing but darkness, without the least dawn of divine light Eph. iv. 18. therefore the understanding must be opened by the enlightening influence of the Divine spirit before any good thing can take place there, before they can discern the depravity of their corrupt nature, or understand the scriptures. ---Can a man see without eyes, and having eyes, can he distinguish colours without light? The eyes of the understanding must be opened, before men can behold the wonderful truths contained in the law of God, and before any divine principle of light can take place there; and if the understandings of men were not greatly darkened, they would not so frequently mistake the way of salvation, neither would they reject the council of God against themselves. But the voice of experience assures us that the natural man, let his external faculties be what they will, cannot discern the things of the spirit

rit of God. Where then does the excellency of human nature consist? Some perhaps may imagine this property belongs to the *human heart*. For the reader's satisfaction, I shall indulge a roving imagination, and examine this commanding and ruling faculty in man; for the heart is the seat of all the affections, and if there be any good thing in man naturally, towards the Lord God of Israel, it will make its appearance there.

Let us examine this point with due inspection, from scripture and matters of fact; and by their concurrent testimony let the truth be established. If we look around, we may see what men's hearts appear to be mostly set upon. What are they grasping after, and pursuing with all their hearts? Is God in all their thoughts; is he the supreme object of their love; is gratitude to their generous benefactor the ruling principle in their hearts? A very little acquaintance with the men of this generation will soon convince us, that in the *unrenewed heart dwells no good thing*. Let us examine our Lord's history of the *unregenerate heart*, Mark vii. 20, 21, 22, 23. If we may credit any thing, we may credit what the voice from Heaven declares, that there is nothing but the poisonous seeds of iniquity lodged in this nursery of all evil; and so far from having any divine principle of *love* to God, that it is actuated by a principle of *hatred* against him; and this astonishing impiety discovers itself, by its opposition to the *will* of God, to the *word* of God, to the *ways* of God, to the ordinances of his house, and to all his commandments. The unrenewed heart is under another dominion and engaged in another interest. Sin and Satan reign there, so that there can be no good thing

thing, until Almighty grace changes the corrupt heart, and give a new heart. Then new dispositions of grace and holiness take place, then he sheds abroad his love there, and stamps his image there; sends his word there, and writes his law there; then he adorns it with all the gifts and graces of the Divine spirit, and takes up his abode there.

But until this divine change takes place, the *human heart*, with all its boasted faculties, is entirely destitute of every good disposition; and have we not awful proofs of the ascendancy of evil habits in this repository of iniquity; have they not got possession and seized the throne; have we not the most convincing testimonies of it; look which way we will, the whole world of ungodly men seems to be lying in wickedness, and the seeds of iniquity has taken such deep root in the hearts of the children of disobedience, that they can never be removed by all the force of moral reasoning, neither is man capable of attaining any spiritual disposition by any means in his power; 'till divine grace interpose and openeth the heart, then all things become new.

Let us proceed to examine the *will* and *affections*, those distinguished faculties, which run through the whole man. Some perhaps may imagine this property belongs to the will of man, but the *will* is defective also, and so deplorably vitiated, as to loath the spiritual manna, and be fond of that which is *evil*. I admit, in the ordinary affairs of life, the *human will* is under no restraint, and even in the external acts of religious devotion, the *human will* is free. Persons may, if they please, attend upon Divine ordina-

ordinances; they may watch at wisdom's gate, and wait at the posts of her doors, and attend to all the external forms of religious worship, as the Pharisees of old did; but to perform any spiritual duty, to worship God in spirit and in truth, they have neither *will* nor *power*. Can an unrenewed person delight himself in the Lord, or take pleasure in holiness, can he love and hate God at one and the same time, can he set his affections on things above, when they are alienated from the life of God? It cannot be: Doth a fountain send forth at the same time *bitter* water and *sweet*? It is all impossible, we cannot so far deny our reason: The bias of the *human will* is averse to holiness, 'till sovereign grace makes a difference; 'till then, they are unwilling to come to Jesus.

But as to sinful amusements, and carnal diversions, these are their delight and their favourite employ; these delusive scenes of imaginary pleasures engage their attention, and engross their warmest affections; they will rise up early and sit up late; neither cold nor darkness will retard them from gratifying their sensual appetite; such is their extreme fondness for the sinful pleasures of time, while they disesteem the glories of eternity. As to sacred devotion *what a weariness is it* to them, with what reluctance and insensibility do they attend divine ordinances; how frequently do they forsake the assembling of themselves together in the house of God, *where prayer is wont to be made*? Neither do these persons desire the knowledge of his ways; and if this be the true state of the *human will*, why should men boast of the power and excellency of it? For my part, I have made a strict enquiry
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into the powers of the will of man, and I find from scripture and experience, that it is obstinate, unruly and perverse, prone to evil, and destitute, entirely destitute of all good, and *Plato* himself acknowledges the corruption of the *human will*, and disowns any *free will* in man to "true good."

Suppose we take a survey of the power of the *human will* in the history of *Lucifer* the son of the morn, and in the history of the fallen angels. Did they not fall from their first estate when left to the freedom of their own will? And if we take a survey of the power of the human will, in our first parents, when left to their own choice, we shall find that *Original Sin* was the consequence of their *free will*. And hath not the human will been sufficiently tried since the fall; was it not tried before the flood, when length of days and strength of constitution furnished men with the greatest opportunity to improve all the powers of the will? But instead of retrieving what it had lost in the fall, mankind grew worse and worse—And God saw that the wickedness of man was great, &c. But vain man would be more wise than his Maker, otherwise he would not boast of the excellency of the *human will*. If any of my readers have fallen into this mistake, let me intreat of them, to weigh and consider attentively what has been before said on the subject, and the Lord direct their hearts into the knowledge of the truth.

I must confess, zealous as I am for the doctrine under consideration, if there was not the most incontestible proofs of it in the Divine word, if there was not daily proofs of the corruption of the *will* reigning uncontrollable in some, mak-

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ing frequent insurrections in all; if the hereditary defilement was not conspicuous in all the sons of Adam's race, I would be far from contending earnestly for it; but the irreconcilable aversion there is in man naturally to this doctrine, is a proof of the corruption of the *human will*; and their denying it, is one of the pernicious effects of it.-----Suppose we appeal to the mistaken disputants of this doctrine.---What has *free will* done since the creation? Suppose we unfold the records of the heavenly deeds and take a view of the sad effects of *free will*. How did it act in *Emanuel's* days? What a strange, inhuman, rebellious part did it act in crucifying the Lord of glory, and in putting the Son of God to open shame; and I may venture to affirm, that all the sins that ever were committed in the world, was the birth of the human will.---Was not Adam's sin the result of free will? I know the discerning reader will readily acknowledge the arrogance of such vain pretensions.---But will the self-righteous person confess the sinful perverseness of his *will*? Very loth is his pride to own his guilt, or to renounce the pleasing absurdity.

I confess it is a time of great darkness, deadness and declension, and the love of many of the professors of pure religion seems to wax cold. There is very little of the appearance of the power of religion left among us; truth is banished almost from all our pulpits, and errors come in like a flood. The affairs of Zion being in such an unpromising state, how should the priests, the ministers of the Lord, bestir themselves, and exert all their influence to plead the cause of grace; and while others are assiduous to exalt
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the dignity of human nature, and the powers of fallen reason, how assiduous should the ministers of Christ be, to set up their standard against every doctrine that is opposite to that of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, which is of pure revelation, and what the meer light of nature never taught men; and by which, they being only guided, have declared against.

No one ever understood the corruption of the *human will* so clearly as Christ did; he foresaw the destructive propensity there would be in the *human will* to that which is evil, and the disorder that the effects would bring upon the sons of men; that it would subject their bodies and their souls to temporal and eternal punishment; he knew also that no *human power* could change the *will*, that no creature in Heaven, of the highest order of angels, could effect it; therefore in pity and compassion to the vessels of mercy, in due time he makes his disobedient people *willing* to yield subjection to him, Psalm cx. 3. But this is the Lord's doings, and not of the *will* of man. Where then does the excellency of the *human will* consist, if it is not in making a difference between the carnal and the spiritual mind? A teacher in Israel told me a few days ago, that he made himself to differ, though the means he enjoyed were the same as are common to others; yet the success was owing to his own *free will*, to his care, diligence and attention, "It was my own reflection, my judgment, and my choice." Thus he spoke, and thus the *Arminians* speak; but a writer who cannot mistake, speaks quite the reverse,-----
"By the grace of God, I am what I am." And indeed if the event of regeneration was to depend

pend upon the *will* of man, it is very uncertain whether any would be renewed at all, for the *human will* is as liable to refuse, as to choose; and if we may credit the scripture account of the *human will*, it is rather prone to evil; therefore the issue must be very uncertain, and would rather determine in favour of sin and in rejection of holiness.

I wish the advocates for the power of *free will* would go and try the experiment with the impious and prophane, who take pleasure in iniquity, and whose foolish hearts are darkened. If they would wish to turn many to righteousness, that they may shine as the stars for ever, and ever, let them try their skill, and use all the persuasive arguments they are masters of. If they know the terrors of the Lord, let them endeavour to persuade men, to convince them of the error of their ways, and see if thereby they can reclaim these workers of iniquity, or prevail on them to renounce the hidden works of darkness, and turn unto the Lord. But alas! 'tis all in vain. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but the power is all of God, and not of the will of man.——Nothing but Almighty grace can subdue the stubborn perverse will.——Can the *Ethiopian* change his skin, or the *Leopard* his spots? Then, and not till then, can those who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do good. I know when the zealous champions of human reason read this doctrine, they will readily take offence at it; for such is their exalted opinion of their human abilities, that they cannot conceive how these things can be.

How strange is it that men should ascribe that power to the creature, which alone is due

to the Creator. Why should the Gospel in one ministers hand, run and be glorified, and be a sweet savour of life to some, and a savour of death unto others? Why should one minister have so many seals to his ministry, and bring many sons unto glory, and others labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought, if the power was in themselves? But we have evident proofs that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of the will of man. So that neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. Ministers may preach, but it is God that worketh in them, and worketh with them both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. Perhaps, some of my readers may think that I have treated the faculties of man in a cruel manner, but I find, upon weighing them in the balance, they are found wanting.

I might have taken some notice of the conscience, *but even the mind and the conscience also are defiled, Tit. i. 15.* and will continue so, till cleansed with the blood of sprinkling. Thus I have traced man in all his distinguished faculties, and I find upon the whole, *there is no soundness in him, that there is none that doeth good, no not one.* Well might a sacred writer say, *What is man that thou art mindful of him?* Surely it must be because the Lord is good, and his mercy endureth for ever, because he is compassionate and infinitely gracious, otherwise the whole race of Adam would be consumed?

But the natural man cannot receive this doctrine, although it comes recommended by the highest

highest authority; his heart rises against it with indignation. What, to have no *will* nor *power* of our own! To leave him nothing to boast of or to glory in; this is a mortifying stroke, too humbling for his proud nature.---That he should have no power or choice of his own in the things which concern his everlasting happiness. Carnal reason cannot conceive how these things can be;---therefore wherever the doctrine of free grace is advanced, these *sons of delusion*, endeavour to prejudice the minds of others against it, by fastening the idea of licentiousness to it.---If men are quite helpless, and have neither *will* nor *power*,---at this rate, it is in vain to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and what necessity is there for obedience, if man have neither *power* nor a willing mind to obey? ---This has been the objection of *carnal reason* ever since christianity made its appearance in the world; but is this making void the law of God. To tell men, that they have neither *will* nor *power* of their own to do any thing that is truly good, and ascribe the whole glory of salvation to free grace, is this a licentious doctrine? I think it rather establishes the law. For if salvation is partly of the *will* of man, and partly of the *power* of God; if it be partly of works, and partly of grace, then man would have whereof to glory; but in this case all boasting is utterly excluded, that the excellency of the *power* may appear to be of God, and not of the *will* of man. I know this state of the case will by no means please the carnal world, because it gives such mean ideas of human nature, but whether men believe it or not, it is an infallible truth, which the scripture plainly teach-

es, and which experience demonstrates; and if men would but search their own hearts, and examine the inward frame of their minds, I persuade myself they would readily acknowledge, that in their flesh dwells no good thing; no not one spiritual disposition to holiness. It would be well if the overseers of the Saviour's flock would take heed to themselves, and to their doctrine. Let not the watchmen of Israel hold their peace, nor cease to warn men how sad their state by nature is.

S E C T. III.

OBSERVATIONS ON MAN'S RECOVERY BY JESUS CHRIST.

THE grand important scheme of redemption was settled in the Divine eternal mind from everlasting. Man's recovery was fixed upon, before his ruin took place, and a Redeemer was provided before Adam fell, or sin was committed, and all without any regard to the works and *merits* of men. This is one of the greatest wonders, and yet one of the surest truths; for when man had destroyed himself by sin, and involved his whole posterity into inevitable ruin and misery; the Almighty Father beheld the vessels of mercy involved in the horrible pit of corrupt nature, among the common mass of mankind. His eyes beheld them in their low estate, and said-----*I have found a ransom*, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have made a covenant with my chosen; and
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when the Almighty Redeemer beheld his chosen race, his righteous seed, plunged into the depths of misery, and utterly unable to extricate themselves from their bondage, he spoke and said, *O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy help.* How pleasing yet how awful is the language, full of delight and full of love.----

Behold what wond'rous grace
The Father hath bestow'd
On sinners of a mortal race
To make them sons of God.

What language is sufficient to describe the wonderful love, that provided a *recovery* for the vessels of mercy, to redeem them from voluntary bondage, and from hopeless captivity. Well might *John* the divine with pleasing astonishment say, *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us.* On us whom he *foreknew*, and set apart for himself. How unsearchable and adorable are the measures of the Father's infinite clemency, and how astonishing the mystery of the Son's redeeming grace; it is beyond all finite conception; our narrow thoughts, and narrower words are too mean to set his glories forth. These are heights not to be reached by sinful mortals; and could we roll back the volumes of eternity, and begin with the astonishing design of grace and love that determined man's redemption, before the birth of time, before the confines of creation were fixed; before days, and weeks, and months, and years were numbered; or before the foundations of the hills were laid, and the curtains of the skies were spread; there we
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might behold the elevated *heights*, and the unfathomable *depths* of Divine love, in restoring the chosen generation, who are included by an eternal decree, among the number of those that should hear of a Saviour's name, and be made partakers of his immense privileges.

"Love without end, and without measure, grace."

MILTON.

How amazing is it that man should be thus regarded by the most High? Man who had destroyed himself, was utterly incapable of extricating himself from the abyss of misery, when there was none to help; infinite wisdom then appeared, and delivered his lawful captives, from error, from sin, from snares and from death, from eternal horror, from blackness and darkness for ever; neither did the *All-sufficient Redeemer* stop here; but to magnify the riches of his all-conquering grace, he not only restored them from the depths of misery, but he gave them a title to an endless inheritance, and to an immortal crown of life.

And this was no precarious thing. The fall and recovery of man was marked out before the foundations of the earth were laid. There was a memorial of this important event in the Divine mind from everlasting, he foresaw what man would prove. The Almighty Father knew that he would deal very treacherously, Jer. iii. 20. and that he would fall into unutterable misery; therefore he provided accordingly for the *vessels of mercy*, which he afore appointed unto glory; and the gracious design was formed, and the plan of it was schemed out, in the very place where it was to be for ever admired.

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And O how will it astonish and delight the saints when they come to Heaven, to behold the wonders of redeeming grace, in bringing so many sons unto glory. How will the countless myriads of happy spirits, when they return to Zion, rehearse to the innumerable company of angels, what Jesus has done for their souls, in redeeming them to God by his blood; there they will speak of his marvellous loving kindness to them in language of immortality, ascribing the whole glory of their salvation to the Lamb that sits upon the throne, and the victory to his death. Thus will the spirits of just men made perfect, the natives of the upper world, fix their contemplations here, and speak his praise in words that are now unutterable----Let the ministers of light cry aloud; and extol the Saviour very high. Let the guardians of the just proclaim the wonders of his dying love, in redeeming his people from so great a death. Let the righteous be glad and rejoice; let the children of Zion shout for joy, *For the Lord hath done it*, the Lord with his high hand, and with his out-stretched arm, hath redeemed Zion, and by his great salvation he hath comforted his people Israel; though they had destroyed themselves, he was their deliverer, grace provided a remedy for all the family of God. How should our drooping thoughts revive at the pleasing reflection, that Jesus is risen, the Redeemer of his people is risen, and ascended on high, the Sun of righteousness is risen in the promise, risen in glory, and risen in the hearts and affections of all his people, never to set any more. Thus I have stated the fall and recovery of man in a plain and clear light. I sincerely wish, those great truths of

christianity may afford divine improvement and delight to every reader ; although to some, every line may appear dull and insipid for want of human science, yet perhaps, on a more deliberate view, what they disesteemed but just before, may be admired by them the next moment. May the great master of assemblies with whom the residue of the spirit is, fasten these divine truths upon the table of every heart, and rivet them there as a nail in a sure place, then will they be convinced of the inviolable and inseparable connection there is in the several parts of that golden chain spoken of by the Apostle, Rom viii. 29. which leads me to

S E C T. IV.

*Observations on the necessity of a Divine Change,
by Grace, in Regeneration.*

THE necessity of a divine change by grace, is an evident proof of the doctrine of *Original Sin*. I have already proved from scripture, that all mankind by nature, are born in sin ; that the leprosy of corruption has spread itself through the whole frame, tainted the bodies of men, infected the soul, and disordered all the intellectual faculties ; so that without a divine change, no man shall ever see the kingdom of God. And this is the doctrine which exactly agrees with the import of that memorable conference which our Divine Lord had with *Nicodemus* John iii. 3. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see*

for the kingdom of God. This is the doctrine of eternal life, which the men of this generation are so averse to, and so frequently mistake.---- By this divine change, I don't mean a change of external profession, or a change of character; this may take place when the new creation is wanting. There may be a new name without a new nature, and a new profession without a new heart. The change here spoken of, is a special, internal, effectual change of the subject, which takes place when the arm of the Lord is revealed in the day of his power, when Christ is formed in the heart, the hope of glory. In this memorable period, principles of grace are implanted, and new dispositions take place; the soul, as to the substance of it, remains the same; but the *qualities* are thereby changed.----The *understanding*, which by nature is darkness, is made light in the Lord.----The *will* that was obstinate and perverse, is made to yield subjection to the Father of spirits; the *affections* and *desires*, which were once carnal, are now made spiritual, holy and heavenly, and set upon things above; in a word, *all things become new*, 2 Cor. v. 17.

And this change, is real, and powerful; it is wrought by the Almighty power of God; and as the power which effects it is divine, so the fruits and effects of it are divine, many and discernable; for the *new birth* is a change of nature.----Of nature, where there was as little of spiritual good, as there was light in chaos, before the creation. It is a change of a stony heart, into an heart of flesh, and this change must take place in man, before he can perform any good work; he may perform *dead works*,
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to ~~unfruitful~~ *evil* works, and have fellowship with the *unfruitful* works of darkness; but he cannot perform good works; it is impossible. Let men boast of their moral perfections, and extol their works of righteousness as long as they please, 'tis all a dream.---The tree must first be made good, before it can bring forth good fruit. The heart must be purged from dead works, before we can bring forth the fruits of righteousness. The *old man*, with his deeds, must be put off, before we can put on the *new man*. We must be created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, before we can perform them, or walk in newness of life.---Grace must first refine the heart, and the spirit; the Comforter must draw, or the sinner will never come to Jesus.

And to whom is this change to be ascribed; is it to the will and power of man; is it to be ascribed to arts and sciences? By no means. Can one man change the nature of another? It cannot be, the scripture tells us plainly---*It is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.* Not of works, least any man should boast. Why then should our reverend divines thus mislead precious souls committed to their care, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men? And if man was not thus depraved by nature, what need would there be of this divine change by grace?---If he were not born in sin, what need would there be of his being born again? If the carnal nature was not corrupt, what need would there be of new dispositions? If he were not fallen in the first Adam, what need was there of his being restored by the second Adam? If death by sin had not passed upon
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all men, there would be no need of repentance unto life for it. Would it not be absurd, to urge the necessity of repentance to men for crimes they are not guilty of? We cannot so far deny our reason, as to say, that men are pure by nature, and invested with those dispositions of holiness, which so many giddy teachers boast of. --- *We have not so learned Christ.*

And if the testimonies of holy writ are not sufficient to prove this point, it must be, because they are of a doubtful interpretation, in their esteem; but words cannot speak plainer; and if men by nature are invested with those divine principles; why do our learned teachers, make such tedious harangues from the pulpit about repentance and remission of sins? Tell us, ye disputers of this world, what need is there of repentance, if there was no sin? Moreover, did ever man repent of himself? Point out, if you can, one single instance in the refined and enlightened ages of *Greece*, of any one that did naturally repent, and seek after God. It is all impossible; for repentance unto life, and remission of sin, is the free gift of God; therefore it must be the height of human folly to boast of our reasoning faculties. The reason why I speak so plainly on this subject, and urge the necessity of regeneration so strongly on my readers, is, because there can be no salvation without it. --- Ministers themselves are but blind guides without the enlightening influence of the Divine Spirit. --- *Ye must be born again*, said the Heavenly speaker; this is the language of the holy scriptures, and the sum and substance of their Heavenly message; and unless this change takes place, no man shall ever see the kingdom of Heaven. We must have

have a better righteousness than that of our own; and except our righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall never enter into the kingdom of God. And we have not many in our age, whose righteousness does not exceed theirs; yet they vainly hope to enter in at the strait gate; but there is no salvation by works of righteousness we have done, or can do; the heart must be changed, and the spirit must be renewed, before we can see the Kingdom of Heaven; and the scriptures ascribe the whole of this change to the Spirit of God. This is the invariable method of obtaining eternal life. It cannot be obtained any other way, but by the grace of God, through the righteousness of our Divine Lord.

S E C T. V.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

THE Dr. asserts, "That the religion of Jesus does not authorize the belief of a soul different and distinct from the body, after death, that the soul dies with the body, and continues in a state of death." But where he met these absurd notions I cannot conceive, unless in the writings of *Thales the Milesian*, who was the first person that broached this pernicious doctrine. I am sure the religion of Jesus never authorized the Dr. or any other, to propagate such extreme infidelity, so prejudicial to the Redeemer's glory, and the peace and happiness of

of his people.---If the soul dies with the body, then our faith is vain, and religion is vain also. The Dr. will do well to inform his readers, how the hope of a future life can be unworthy the assent of the refined world; for if there be not an after life, to what purpose does he worship a Deity, and concern himself about the performance of religious exercises, or the commission of sin? I acknowledge, the immortality of the soul is a sublime subject; and to do justice to the subject, would require a much abler pen, and a larger compass, than the number of my pages will allow; but something I shall attempt in favour of the important subject; and make it appear from scripture and reason, that life and immortality is brought to light by the gospel.

The immortality of the soul was a favourite subject with the Old Testament saints, and is highly recommended by the writers of the New Testament. It is a subject that always was, and always will be, in very high esteem with the truly pious; and in order to give it a genuine lustre, I shall mention a set of writers of the most dignified characters that ever adorned the christian church, since the Reformation, whose attestations in favour of this article are unquestionable, and if illustrious names challenge the Doctor's attention, I think this doctrine comes recommended with witnesses not a few. Amongst the number of those who have laboured more abundantly in favour of this article, are the learned and pious Bishop *Beveridge*, see his private thoughts, Archbishop *Usher*, Bishop *Hooker*, the ingenious Dr. *Isaac Watts*, and the judicious Mr. *John Flavel*. Authorities unexcepti-

unexceptionable. I own some of the Heathen philosophers spoke very doubtfully of the immortality of the soul, and delivered their sentiments of it as though they did but half believe it; nevertheless, others wrote many learned arguments in favour of the subject; and as I have now an opportunity, in the course of this work, I shall pay a tribute of respect to some of these learned critics.

Plato, that great philosopher, so remarkably distinguished for his superior genius, maintained the eternity of souls; "that they always were, and ever shall be."

Heracles asserts, "that every soul is immortal, and that which is always moving, is eternal."

Cicero, "that souls are immortal is not to be doubted of, unless we are dunces in physick; and he that concludes that the soul dies with the body, fights against reason, supported by no reason."

Socrates discoursed largely on the immortality of the soul, a little before he drank the fatal cup, and urged many arguments to prove, that souls existed before they came into this mortal state; and if they existed before they had union with the body, they can and will exist after death.

Trismegistus asserts, "that man consists of two parts, being mortal as to his body, but immortal as to his soul, which is his best and perfect part."

Locke, when upon his dying bed, wrote to *Colins* the following sentences. "This life affords no solid satisfaction but the consciousness of doing well in this world, and the hope of another

ther.---My philosophy has been long admired, and this is the very effence of it."

But what speak I of philosophers; does not the most barbarous nations of the earth believe the immortality of the soul. The *Turks* acknowledge it, and the very savage, illiterate *Indians* believe, that the soul liveth in pleasure or pain after death.---"It is the mutual agreement of all nations, says *Cicero*, that the soul remains after death." That the bodies of men die is certain; but who ever heard of a soul's funeral? Where is the man that can give the history of her life and death? As the Dr. is a *physician* of eminence, it may not be improper to enquire of him, whether any disease can arise in a spiritual substance? or if an angelic spirit can be sick and die? and if not an angel, why a soul that is endowed with the same spiritual nature, and capable of the same future rewards. I think the prophet *Isaiah*, when speaking of the new Jerusalem, mentions the privileges of the natives of the upper world in the most striking language. *The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.* Isa. xxxiii. 24. If the Dr. can prove the death of one soul, I will readily retract all that I have written to the contrary.

Some there are, who ascertain that the soul dies with the body, and at the resurrection, will revive and return to its own proper body again; but the soul dies not, therefore it cannot be said to be raised from the dead; the soul is an immortal immaterial substance which never dies; and this I think is evident from the nature of the soul itself, for it is of the same nature with angels, who are immortal and incorporeal spirits, and by no means subject to corruption and death.

death; yea the soul of man has a likeness to God; it bears a resemblance of the Divine nature. The image of God in man, chiefly consists in the soul; it is of God's immediate creation; it comes from him, and is the very breath of his uncreated excellency; and if the Doctor would but consider its several powers and faculties, especially the understanding, and the will, he would readily conclude that the soul is an immortal, and never dying substance. The soul is capable of conversing with eternal ages. Man has a soul of vast desires, and those who have obtained the greatest stock of spiritual and divine knowledge, have a continual desire of knowing more, and their desires will never be satisfied in this life. And have we not many impartial witnesses, that there is in man a desire after immortality, which is not in any but immortal creatures. The heirs of salvation aspire after the perfection of angels. After the unutterable glory of the spirits of just men made perfect, they would gladly exchange the streams for the fountain; where all their desires will be perfectly satisfied, when they shall awake in the Saviour's likeness; neither can we suppose that those desires are planted in them in vain; the expectations of the righteous shall never be disappointed in this respect. Their desires shall be granted, when they take their leave of the whole creation, and bid this world adieu. Their unembodied spirits shall ascend through the separating firmament, and enter the happy mansions, there to abide for ever, which is an evident demonstration of the immortality of the soul. Moreover, the soul of man is a pure unmixed and simple substance; it is not composed of
matter

matter and form, as other creatures are; neither is it made up of the four elements, fire, water, earth and air, which is capable of being dissolved into them again, as our bodies are. The soul has nothing contrary to itself which can be destructive of it. It is not as an accident in a subject, which, when the subject is destroyed, is destroyed with it. If the soul has any subject on which it depends, I think it must be the body. But it is so far from being dependent upon the body, and perishing with it, that, on the contrary, when the soul departs, the body perishes. And if it has any cause of its being and dependance, it must be from God, *who only bath immortality*, originally, and independently of himself. Angels are immortal, and the souls of men are immortal; and so will the bodies of men be immortal after the resurrection, but these all derive their immortality from the *King immortal*. On him the soul depends, and by him it is preserved. He indeed, if he would, could reduce it to nothing, but since he has declared he will not, the Dr. may depend, that it is immortal and shall never die.

Moreover, the immortality of the soul may be proved from the law of nature, and from the religion of mankind in general. All the nations of the earth profess some religion, and keep up some kind of religious worship; and why do they worship a Deity, or to what purpose is their religion, if the soul dies with the body, or remains not after death? How strange is it, that men should run into such extreme lengths of folly and infidelity. I have often wondered at the dreadful horrors, and stings of conscience, which impious men have sometimes

discovered at their approaching dissolution; and could never shake them off. Are not these evident proofs that there is a Divine Being, to whom men must be accountable for their conduct? But if there was no after life, in which men shall live, either in happiness or in misery; then it would be needless to mind religion; then men may eat, drink, and be merry. But it is evident from the sacred oracles, that the souls of men, immediately after the dissolution of their bodies, enters upon an eternal state either of happiness or of misery, according to their deeds done in the body. I admit the bodies of men may be broken to pieces; men may kill the body, and worms may consume it; but none can kill the soul. At death, *the spirit shall return to God that gave it*; and we have the everlasting word, and the everlasting promise of an unchanging God, made in an everlasting covenant with his people, that their souls shall never perish, but have *eternal life*. And if, after all these precious promises, when they bid adieu to all human things, they should be deprived of seeing the face of their heavenly Father; if their souls should perish with their bodies, or be in any place exempt from his presence, they would be undone for ever; and of all men the most miserable. But, nothing can break the sacred union between Christ and his people; *because he liveth, they shall live also; and he that believeth in me, says the Almighty Saviour, shall never die*. Indeed, all practical religion depends upon this doctrine, and the denial of it, must open a door to all manner of licentiousness, and the opposers of it, in all ages, have been bad livers. Such persons can have

have no ideas of invisible realities; they never glance one thought to God, nor practice imaginary flights from this to another world; they never, in their meditations, reach the Heaven of Heavens, where God resides; nor intermeddle with their original glories; for if their affections were once set on things above, and their conversation was in Heaven, they would never deny the immortality of the soul; which is also evidently manifest from God's eternal purpose in election. That there is a personal and eternal election of some to *everlasting life*, is evident from the sacred writings, and this *eternal act* regards their whole persons, body and soul; for they are said, not only to be chosen in Christ, and appointed unto salvation; but also *ordained to eternal life*; and if one of the chosen race could be lost or perish, then the purpose of God, according to election, must fail; which cannot be; for his council shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. If the soul dies with the body, as the Dr. asserts, then either God never did *ordain* his people to eternal life, or he must change his purpose, which he will never do; for the thoughts of his heart endureth unto all generations.----And if it were possible, that any of the chosen generation, who were given to the Almighty Saviour before the foundation of the world; who were preserved in him, and committed to his care, could perish, then the Redeemer would lose a part of his purchase; neither could he be said to see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. But the scripture puts this matter out of all doubt, and proves the immortality of the soul, by the inestimable ransom paid for it. Therefore the apostle adds,

We are bought with a price; not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but the *precious* blood of Christ; consequently, as the learned Dr. *Bentley* observes, "The soul is of more worth and excellency, than the sun, and all his planets, and all the stars in the world."

For my part, I cannot but think the Dr. in his freest moments, must have some doubts arise in his mind about a future state of existence. What will he say in the day of his *visitation*, when death shall lay his cold hands upon him, and when God shall require his soul of him; will he be unconcerned, as a tree that is cut down? Will he have no hopes nor fear of a future life? I would willingly hope better things of the Dr.---For if the soul dies with the body, then the Heavenly mansions must be void of inhabitants; and there will be no spirits of just men made perfect, before the throne of God.---If this was the case, what need had the *Fore-runner* of his people, to go before, to prepare mansions of glory for them, if they were not to follow after. But the rock of ages, and the strength of Israel, hath not only engaged by a firm decree, but he has sworn by *two immutable* things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie,---that all those who take refuge in him, shall never die; their whole persons being united to Christ, they are therefore a part of his mystical body, and remain in union with him after death. For as the union of the two natures of the Son of God, was not dissolved when his soul and body was at death separated; neither is the union subsisting between Christ and his people, dissolved at the period of their death; if this was the case, then the God of
peace,

peace, and the Prince of peace, and the holy Spirit of grace, would not only lose the *temple*, which has been the dwelling-place of their delightful abode, but also a considerable part of their glory, and oh!

How would the powers of darkness boast
If but one praying soul be lost.

But our Lord Jesus Christ assures us, that tho' the wicked, at death, shall go into everlasting punishment, the righteous shall enter *into life eternal*. So that the immortality of the soul receives the highest confirmation from God's eternal purpose in election; and all those who were given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, who are united to him, and sanctified by the holy spirit in due time, shall at last be saved by him, with an everlasting salvation. But if the soul dies with the body, there can be no expectation of future glory; neither can the wicked be said to receive a retribution according to the deeds done in the body, or go away into everlasting punishment, prepared for them. Jude iv. Moreover, if the souls of the righteous perish with their bodies at death, why are they pronounced blessed who die in the Lord? How can they be said to enter into the joy of their Lord, and be continually praising him, if the soul dies with the body? Surely nothing can be more foreign to such a situation and employ,---than death. If those who have committed their immortal treasure into the Redeemer's hands, could fall a sacrifice to death, or could the prey be taken from the Mighty, then our confidence in the rock of ages would be shaken, and our hopes of eternal life

would be confounded. If this was the case with the righteous after death, we should not so often hear them in their expiring moments, will for the wings of a dove, to steer their course above the skies, where the dear wealth of spirits lies. Nor can we suppose that the desires of any of the saints would be so vigorous and active after a dissolution, as they sometimes are, if they did not believe, that when they are absent from the body, they will be present and for ever with the Lord.---If Paul had imagined that his soul was to have remained in a state of death, after his departure from the body, it would have been easy for him to determine which was most eligible for him, to live, or to die. Certainly it would have been better for him, and I am sure much better for the churches of Jesus, if he had continued amongst them, upon earth, unto this day; but the apostle knew, and if he was confident of any thing, he was confident of this; that when his earthly tabernacle was dissolved, that his immortal part would instantly enter into an invisible world, and be ever with the Lord, who is the fountain of all solid pleasure, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and from whom all the streams of immortal life and happiness flow; therefore they must be blessed indeed, who dwell in his presence, and are surrounded with his favour.---From these circumstances, we may conclude, that the soul is immortal, and shall never die. I think I cannot conclude this section in language more refined, and more suited to the subject, than in the following lines.

“ The

" The soul, 'tis of th' immortal kind,
 " Not made of earth, nor air, or wind;
 " Out-lives the mould'ring clay, and leaves
 " this globe behind.

" In limbs of clay though she appears,
 " Array'd in roses skin, and deck'd with ears
 " and eyes,
 " The flesh is but the soul's disguise.

" From all the laws of matter free;
 " From all we feel and all we see,
 " She stands eternally distinct, and must for
 " ever be."

The wicked are no sooner dead, but in hell they lift up their eyes, being in torment, Luke xvi. 23. There the fallen angels are reserved in chains of darkness, till the judgment of the great day, Jude vi. But if their souls had perished with their bodies, they would never have been reserved in chains of blackness and darkness for ever.---But the righteous, when they die, and leave this globe behind, their souls immediately goe to Jesus the mediator; to the spirits of just men made perfect; to an innumerable company of angels, and to *God the judge of all*, there to abide for ever. But how the soul at death wings her way to the immortal regions, is beyond my finite comprehension. The sacred oracle of inspiration assures us, that *it returns to God who gave it*, Eccl. xii. 7. And I have sometimes thought the guardian angels who encamp round about the saints, while they sojourn in the *tents of Kedar*, attend them in their departing moments, to convey their un-

embodied spirits safe to glory, with acclamations of great joy. And we have a passage, much in favour of this sentiment, in the history of Lazarus, *who was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom*, Luke xvi. 22.----Thus I have finished my observations in favour of the immortality of the soul, which are my stedfast belief, and which I hope will be found agreeable to the standard of the Bible, to which the reader will do well to take heed. With regard to the place of the soul's residence during its absence from the body, and the general judgment; as it is a controverted point, I shall make it the subject of the ensuing section.

S E C T VI.

Observations on the place of the Soul's residence during its absence from the body, and the general judgment.

THE Socinians, and some of the Arminians assert, "That the soul is in a deep sleep with the body, insensible of happiness or misery, and destitute of all *sensation*, and *operation*, till the general judgment." Others assert, "That there is an *intermediate state* affixed for the reception of departed spirits." But what authority these men have for such absurd delusions, I cannot conceive. I shall wave the former of these delusive notions, and make a few remarks on the latter.

That there is a two-fold reception for the souls of the righteous, and the wicked, immediately after death; the one of *happiness*, and the

the other of *mifery*, is certain, from the unalterable decree of God, which has irrevocably fixed their different places of abode. So that they which would pafs from mifery to happinefs, cannot, Luke xvi. 26. The fouls of the wicked, at death, immediately go into everlafting punifhment; but the righteous into life eternal.

Their longing fpirits pant and rife
To their celestial feat,
Above thofe ruinable fkies
They make their laft retreat.

Joyful they lay their bodies down,
And leave this lifelefs clay,
Without a figh, without a groan,
They ftretch and foar away.

They fteer their courfe above the fkies,
Farewel this barren land,
They view the fhore with longing eyes,
Where beck'ning angels ftand.

Thither Elijah was conveyed in a fiery chariot, and instantly introduced into everlafting habitations, as foon as Heaven had figned his grand releafe from the earth. I would not choofe to put too much confidence in the judgment of men, refpecting the place of the fouls refidence during its abfence from the body, and the general judgment; I rather choofe to appeal to the *law* and to the *testimony*.----What became of the venerable *elders* who obtained a good report through faith; are they not *inberiting the promifes*? What became of the *cloud of witnesses*,

nesses, and the suffering martyrs, who laid down their lives for Christ and his gospel, some of the most dignified characters that could be selected from all ages, of whom the world was not worthy; did they all perish? The *prophets*, where are they? And the *apostles*, what became of them? Are they not re-instated in that eternal mansion, prepared for their final reception, before the foundation of the world? Suppose we could transmit our meditations to the *third Heavens*, and ask the shining order of beings above, whence they came, and where is the place of their residence? Their answer seems comprised in that easy flow of delightful language, contained in those noble passages, Rev. vii. 14, 15. *We came out of great tribulation; therefore are we before the throne*; where those pure spirits will spend, not a few days only, in refined pleasure, but an endless eternity in unutterable joy. Surely every person who claims an interest in these eternal mansions, cannot but listen, with a pleased attention, to such a subject as this? These remarks, I think, are sufficient to satisfy every discerning reader, respecting the place of the souls residence, during its absence from the body, and the general judgment. But there are a set of men, in our days, who assign an intervening mansion for the residence of souls departed. This absurd notion gave the Dr. great umbrage; therefore he makes an apology to the publick, see his page 74. *I should not have spoken on this subject*, viz. the death of the soul,---*had not the gross abuse which hath crept into christianity*, viz. *purgatory and prayers to dead men*, obliged me to it, and shew the false foundation which that delusion is founded upon.

I ob-

I observe Mr. O Leary has made strict scrutiny into the Doctor's errors, I wonder he passed by the fore-cited assertions, especially if he has any thing to offer in favour of an intermediate state; if the Dr. has misrepresented the errors of the church of *Rome*, Mr. O Leary will do well to stand forth and confute the Doctor's assertions on this subject; and I beg leave to remind him, not to forget the gentleman and the scholar, in his future letters; it is unbecoming the character of a professed divine, to deal in reproachful language, which I think, is extremely wrong, and tends rather to provoke resentment, and increase animosity, than convince the mind, or confute error. For my part, I desire, ever to be open to conviction; and I am fully persuaded, that many of my subscribers, of manifold denominations, will be glad to see what Mr. O Leary has to offer in favour of an intervening mansion, for the residence of souls departed. The publick have waited long expecting to see his defence in favour of *purgatory*; and if they should be disappointed, in all probability, it will be imputed, either to an incapacity in the letter-writer, or to an impossibility. I indeed verily believe, it must be a puzzling employ. It may be I bear too hard upon Mr. O Leary, in asking a proof which is not within the compass of his abilities; if so, he will do well to call in the friendly assistance of the holy fathers, and if it should not come within the reach of their knowledge, to prove from scripture, or from reason, their favourite tradition; I would advise Mr. O Leary, to lay down his pen, and proceed no further. But what will the publick say; what will the Dr. say;

say; what will the church say, if neither priests nor bishops can prove this superstitious tenet? Will they not say, and that very justly, that it is a gross imposition upon the ignorant, and unwary, and a grand delusion? Will they not from hence conclude,---*By this craft they have their wealth?* I must own, it appears to me, to be the whole power and policy of the *Romish clergy*, and the main pillar of their support; neither is there the least shadow of pretence for such a notion, within the whole compass of Divine revelation. It was not established in the *third* and *fourth* centuries, but afterwards crept into the church; first as a private and doubtful opinion, till the end of the seventh century, and afterwards it came to be more generally received in that part of the church which was subject to the *Bishop of Rome*; still it was thought, without being an *article of faith*, 'till about the middle of the *seventeenth century*, when it was established in the *council of Florence*; all the Bishops, at first, vigorously opposing it, but at last, either through weakness of judgment, or fear of losing their gain, gave way to it, and it has been continued to this day, without the shadow of Divine authority; therefore, we cannot suppose an intermediate state to be a place of residence for souls departed. The place of their residence is far remote from all human power, and infinitely above all human *policy*. One would imagine that it must offer the greatest affront to the judgment of discerning men, to suppose that they believe any such absurd notions. I have frequently conversed with persons of rank and fortune; men of penetration and refinement, that are members of the *Romish church*, who readily

acknowledge, *purgatory* to be a *tradition* of their church, but no article of their belief.---- I shall mention a passage or two, to disprove an intervening mansion, being the place of the souls residence, during its absence from the body, and the general judgment, and dismiss this part of the subject. *Stephen* in his expiring moments, commits his departing spirit *into his Redeemer's hands*, Acts vii. 59. And the Heavenly Speaker, the faithful and true witness, assured the penitent criminal on the cross, that he should be with him in Paradise, that is, in Heaven, at the fountain head of everlasting felicity; which the reader will please to observe, was to commence on that same day, Luke xxiii. 43. And we are well assured from the sacred word, that at death, the soul returns to God that gave it, Eccl. xii. 7.---As soon as the souls of the righteous are absent from the body, they are present with the Lord, there to continue till the time of the restitution of all things, when all the *elect* shall be gathered in from the four corners of the earth, and the top stone laid. Then will *Shiloh* come, and ascend his judgment-seat; and all the unnumbered millions of departed spirits, shall return from their separate abodes, and resume their own proper bodies; then will misery and happiness, both consummate, and both everlasting, be awarded by the righteous Judge. But how, or in what manner, the soul will return, and resume the body in the general judgment, will be the subject of the ensuing section.

SECT.

S E C T. VII.

*Observations on the Soul's reassuming the Body
in the general Judgment.*

I AM now entering on a mysterious subject, which is difficult to conceive of, and beyond the power of any finite mind fully to describe. Perhaps it may not be improper, on this occasion, to inform the reader of a question that was proposed to me some months ago, on this subject, by a lady of genteel figure and ample fortune, in the County of Cork, which I think every true critic will admire; the question was, ---“If the state of the soul at death, is interchangeably fixed by the irrevocable decree of Heaven, so that it cannot pass from misery to happiness, referring to Luke xvi. 26. If at death the spirit goes whence it shall not return, referring to Job x. 21. how will it appear in the body at the general judgment?”---I paused, ---I pondered a little space, on the touches of her natural eloquence; I was astonished at the discovery of such delicacy of sentiment, and in compliance to her request, in order to adjust the deserved *merit* of such a refined genius, so remarkable for her fine accomplishments, and nice discernment, I shall give a discussion of the question proposed.

And the reader, if he pleases to consult the sacred writings with due inspection, will find not only the possibility, but the reality of the souls reassuming the body, in the general judgment, which I hope will preserve my ideas from
censure,

censure, the consideration of which, must afford sublime pleasure here, and will be a source of divine satisfaction for evermore.

When the evangelist *Luke* asserts, *They which would pass from hence, cannot.* The meaning is, that the souls of the wicked, now in torment, cannot pass from misery to happiness, because of the unpassable gulph of a Supreme decree, which hath reserved them in everlasting chains, of darkness, unto the appointed period, *Jude vi.* till then, they cannot pass. At death, the body goes to the grave and sees corruption, never to return any more to its former state of existence in this world; and the spirit ascendeth upwards, never to return any more to a sinful corruptible body, until the solemn day appointed, in which God will judge the world in righteousness; until the Divine power gives the word of command, *Awake ye dead, and come to judgment*; and at the solemn signal of his all-powerful voice, the graves will give up their dead. Then, and not till then, shall every living soul return and resume its proper body, and both appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; neither is there any difficulty in conceiving how easy it is with God, with whom all things are possible, to reunite soul and body, by the word of his power. How natural, how pertinent is the acknowledgement of holy *Job*—*I know that thou canst do every thing.* *Job xlii. 2.*

Instances we have in scripture, of some, whose souls returned to their bodies in this world, after death, by the word of Divine power; witness the *widow's son*, *Luke vii. 12.* and *Lazarus*, who was dead four days, and at rest in the silent grave, *John xi. 30, 33, 34.* But whether their

their spirits were caught up into the third Heavens; or where was the place of their residence, during their absence from the body, is one of the secrets of God; yet of this we are certain, their souls did return to their proper bodies; but as to the manner how the soul will resume the body in the general judgment, is a mystery beyond my comprehension. But I apprehend it will be *instantaneously*; neither is there any difficulty in conceiving, that God is as able to command the soul, *instantaneously* into the body, in the morning of the resurrection, as to demand it, *instantaneously*, out of the body, in the moment of its dissolution.

Some of the early fathers, who were remarkable for their great veneration of antient traditions, say, "That the soul, while it is in its dignity separate from the body, is *clothed and sustained with light*; and when the spirits of just men shall re-enter the body, *they shall enter with the light*." "Then, says my author, shall the bodies of the righteous *shine*, with undiminished lustre, in their Saviour's image, like the *brightness* of the *firmament*, and as the stars for ever and ever." Which exactly agrees with the prophet Daniel's description of the righteous, Dan. iii. 12.

I would not wish to impose my sentiments, on this particular, upon the reader; but to me it seems probable, that the souls of the righteous, at the Divine command, will return willingly, to repossess their raised bodies, and bring them to a partnership with them in glory. And if the belief can in thought, follow the unembodied spirit to a state of happy existence; sure I am, a ray of pensive complacency

ny must beam across the immortal mind; at the pleasing hopes of yet again meeting its dear, deceased companion, in another world, never more to be divided by accident or death; and, in all probability, the unembodied spirit will be glad to see its *old* and intimate partner, as two intimate friends, after a long parting; and with mutual delight, they will embrace each other again. Neither is the happiness of believers consummate and compleat, till a reunion takes place; then will they be invested indeed, with the inheritance of the saints in light, and be reinstated, body and soul, into unutterable joy and pleasures for evermore.

Thus I have transmitted a specimen of my thoughts on the souls reassuming the body, in the general judgment. If the reader should receive any pleasure and satisfaction from these observations, it will be a pleasing recompence of reward to the writer. I shall conclude this part of my subject in the words of the pious Bishop Beveridge. "I believe, that when our bodies, by the word of Almighty power, shall be called together again, our souls shall be prepared to meet them, and so both appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." See private Thoughts.

S E C T. VIII.

Observations on the particular and general Judgment.

IT seems a thing absurd with the Dr. to suppose a general judgment at the end of the
 VOL. I. E world,

world, and at the same time, a previous judgment immediately after death. But why it should be looked upon as a thing absurd and incredible, I cannot conceive, for the scriptures mention a *particular* judgment, immediately after death, which refers only to the soul, according to the apostle's assertion. *After death to judgment.* As soon as the soul is separate from the body, it is present before God, to receive the righteous unerring sentence, Come ye blessed; or go ye cursed. And by virtue of which, the soul is consigned to its proper place of happiness or misery, there to remain till the judgment of the great day, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude vi. For we are not to suppose that the place of the souls residence is affixed, without the Divine order, which commences immediately after death.

But the *general judgment* refers to both soul and body, therefore it is called, by way of distinction, *the last judgment*; and it would be very improper to say the last judgment, if there was not a former; for, as a first resurrection supposes a second, so a general judgment necessarily supposes a particular one. And there is nothing more certain, than that there will be a general judgment. God has appointed the day in which, and ordained the person by whom, he will judge the world in righteousness; when every eye shall see him, and all shall stand before him, both small and great, which is not the case, in the particular judgment, for the bodies remain in the silent grave, and do not awake, nor appear before God, till the last judgment, which is styled, by that famous writer, Jude, *The judgment of the great day*; when Jesus shall descend with

with ten thousand of his saints with him, and appear in his *ultimate glory*; in the glory of his wisdom, in the glory of his power, and in the glory of all his divine perfections, as God, Man, Mediator; in his personal glory, and in his relative glory, in his Father's glory, and in the glory of his holy angels. He that once appeared in the form of a servant, will then appear with all the triumphs of victory, invested with all the ensigns of majesty and glory; and his appearance at the general judgment, will be glorious. Then the dead shall be raised and appear before him; the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed; the books opened, and the sentences pronounced, and immediately executed. In that solemn period, he will execute the exceeding greatness of his power, with great solemnity; then he will inflict *great* punishment on all the workers of iniquity, and give *great* rewards to all those who keep his commands. The prophet *Joel* gives a description of this solemn day, *Joel* ii. 11, and adds---*Who shall abide it!* How the *Arians* will abide the day of his wrath, or how the *Socinians* and *Arminians* will abide it, I know not. If I remember right, the Jewish doctor's call it, *The judgment of torment* to the wicked, and to all such who deny the Lord God; when they shall be in full torment, which they are not till then, but like guilty prisoners, who are confined in a prison till the assize. Neither are the righteous in full and perfect happiness, until the general or last judgment, when both soul and body shall be united, *and be ever with the Lord.*-----Which leads me to consider the change that will pass

upon the bodies of the righteous and the wicked in the general judgment, which shall be the subject of the ensuing section.

S E C T. IX.

Observations on the change, that will pass upon the Body, in the last general Judgment.

THE subject of the resurrection, is the body and not the soul, and that such as it is in this life, vile and mortal, shall be raised again; though it may pass under many alterations in the grave, yet the matter and substance of it will remain the same, in some form, or in some place or other; for the body will never lose its being or its nature; as it was not formed out of nothing, it will never be reduced to nothing, unless we can suppose that dust is nothing. *Though worms destroy this body, said that divine philosopher Job, yet in my flesh shall I see God, Job xix. 26, 27.* In the morning of the resurrection, the bodies of the righteous will be changed and fashioned, and made like to the glorious body of the second Adam. *Who shall change our vile bodies,* says that divine historian Paul, Phil. iii. 21. though not so as to lose its former nature and substance; but change it as to its qualities, from a natural to a spiritual body, 1 Cor. xv. 44. so as to be subject to the soul, so as to be perpetually employed in spiritual exercise, and delighted in spiritual objects; *Behold,* says that elevated writer, Paul, I shew you a mystery, or a secret, which

which perhaps, he learned in the *third Heavens*; a mystery which was never mentioned before, by any of the prophets or apostles, which had been hid for many ages from the wise and prudent, and could never have been revealed by the light of nature or natural philosophy.-----*We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed.* The meaning is, we shall not all die, as men naturally do, and continue under the power of death for a time; neither does the apostle say, it is appointed for all men once to die; the word *all* is excepted, because at the end of the world, when all the *elect* shall be gathered in, from the four corners of the earth; many shall be found alive, who will be caught up to meet the Lord, 1 Thes. iv. 15. as *Elijah* and *Enoch* were; that they might not see death.-----*But we shall be changed*, says the sacred writer; that is, from mortality to immortality, from corruption to incorruption, from weakness to strength, from dishonour to honour and glory; and this change all the saints shall undergo, whether dead or alive, at the coming of Christ; the dead, by a resurrection from the dead, and the living, by a secret and sudden power, which will at once render their bodies, without separating them from their souls, *immortal* and *glorious*. And this change will be without the least sensation or pain to the living saints, it will be imperceptible and instantaneous, and, in all probability, the time will come, when unnumbered millions shall participate of immortality with the soul, whose bodies shall never see corruption, nor moulder in the silent grave; but they must *be changed*, and it is easy to account for the necessity of such a change, in order to the enjoyment of

the Heavenly state; because the body that now is mortal, must put on immortality, before it can enter into the invisible world; for flesh and blood, corrupted with sin, cannot enter the Heavenly state, neither is the body, as it now is, capable of enjoying the Heavenly glory; were it to be introduced into the everlasting mansions, in the condition it now is, it would not be able to bear the glory of that place and state; the effulgence of the Divine essence, would dazzle and confound the mortal sight; therefore the body must be changed.

What shall I say with regard to the wicked; will they be forgotten, and lie eternally hid in the gloomy mansions of the silent grave? No, no, they must awake, and shake off the dust of ten thousand years, they must arise and appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and receive according to the deeds done in the body; but there will be a difference between the resurrection of the just and the unjust, in many respects, particularly, as to the time; *The dead in Christ shall rise first*, therefore blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. Though the wicked shall rise again, yet not in the first resurrection, or in the resurrection of life; the righteous shall be raised first, by virtue of their *election union* to Christ, and shall stand with acceptance in his sight, as those who have found favour.

And as there is a difference in the time, so there will be a great difference in the circumstances of the one, from the other; the righteous will rise to everlasting life, but the wicked to everlasting shame and contempt. Their bodies

dies will be raised immortal, and changed from corruption to incorruption, and in such a state as to continue under perpetual punishment, yet they will not be made free from sin; whereas the bodies of the saints will not only be raised immortal and incorruptible, but powerful, spiritual and glorious, and fashioned like to the glorious body of Jesus.

Thus I have given the reader a specimen of my observations on the change that will pass upon the bodies of the *just* and the *unjust*, in the general judgment; which includes all the information, which at present I can give on the subject. I would gladly lay down my pen here, in point of controversy, if there was not a necessity laid upon me to make further use of it; but the *grand article*, and the masterpiece of the Doctor's daring insult offered to the uncreated glory of the Son of God, demands my special attention; and which comes next under consideration.

S E C T. X.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

TH E Dr. informs the publick, that "JESUS of *Nazareth* is no more than man, and as to the account given of his Divinity, in scripture, it is a piece of history he is at liberty to believe or not, and no way relative to his faith as a christian."

Whatever the Doctor's motives may be, cer-

tain I am, that he has given a very inadequate and unjust description of the Messiah, who is represented, in the sacred writings, under a variety of delightful characters, which proves his Divinity, his eternal power and Godhead, and particularly his everlasting Name, written upon his vesture and on his thigh, KING of KINGS and LORD of LORDS; and the description given of him by JEHOVAH the FATHER, runs in this exalted strain: "Mine equal," *the man that is my fellow*, Zach xiii. 7. and the prophet Isaiah, when speaking of JEHOVAH the SON, the Rock of ages, the immutable Divinity, he styles him, The MIGHTY GOD, the EVERLASTING FATHER, the PRINCE OF PEACE; these were the glorious titles which the antient of days assumed from everlasting ages; these were the transporting names by which he was called, and to which he answered through all the records of time, and these immortal characters by which the Star of Jacob, and the Glory of the Gentiles hath revealed himself to men, are plainly engraved in the volumes of eternity, there the sacred epithets stand recorded, and will be had in everlasting esteem by all that love his Name.

But the Dr. informs the world, that these grand and distinguishing titles, relating to the person and office of Christ, are no way relative to his faith; from hence we may conclude, without any breach of charity, that the Doctor's faith is not of the right kind; for if it was true and genuine, it would constrain him to acknowledge the Messiah to be the true God, and the everlasting King, according to the prophet Jeremiah's declaration, Jer. x. 10.

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I have often admired, in searching the sacred history of Divine revelation, with what care and exactness this doctrine is stated both in the Old and New Testaments, with what copiousness it is displayed, with what zeal and fervency of spirit it is urged by the sacred penmen; and with what unwearied zeal and diligence, it is guarded from the insults of wicked men by all the prophets and apostles; if I was to transmit the proofs that offer to lend their assistance on this occasion, I might transcribe a considerable part of the Old and New Testaments, but it will be sufficient to observe to my readers, that the Divinity of Christ is a fundamental article of the christian faith; it is called the foundation of God, which stands sure; though many deny it, and others endeavour to banish it from their pulpits, it is, nevertheless, reckoned among the first principles of the doctrines of Christ, and the belief of it is absolutely necessary to eternal life; as the whole glory of the gospel is connected with it, and those who deny it, must not only be ignorant of the scriptures, but of the power of God.

If I am not mistaken, it was this doctrine that so much offended the obstinate Jews, and the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, because he made himself equal with God; and have we not many such ignorant Jews in our age, who reject the council of God against themselves, and deny the Divinity of our supreme Lord, notwithstanding it is the manifest doctrine of the holy Bible, and the doctrine of eternal life; a doctrine witnessed by all the prophets and apostles, and the doctrine of our incomparable Teacher himself; yet there are a set of men in
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our age who deny it, notwithstanding Christ himself hath said,----*I and my Father are one*, yet how many ministers of darkness are there who reject this sacred truth, but there is a time coming, when every Arian shall know that Jesus is the true God and eternal life;----That Christ is inferior and subordinate to the Father in his human nature, all our orthodox divines will admit, but that he is inferior in his Divine nature cannot be; for there is a oneness and an equality in their nature, essence, power and glory; there is an equal concord, and a perpetual union of counsel between them both, there is a oneness of perfection and glory in them. In Christ *dwells all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily*, Col. ii. 9. not only the fulness, but all the fulness of the Godhead, and not only in part, but bodily in him; hence he is represented as the brightness of the Fathers inconceivable glory, *In thee*, says the pious Dr. Watts, *the Father's glories shine*, therefore, says the holy One of Israel; *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*.----He that hath beheld my glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God, hath seen the Father, that is, the image of his invisible and incomprehensible Deity; so that Christ must be a Divine person, and he is represented by one of the first writers of the New Testament; *God over all, blessed for ever*. And if he was not the incomprehensible, immutable Divinity, divine homage would never be ascribed to him; whereas the apostle Paul puts this matter out of all doubt, and speaks as though he would stop the mouth of every Arian, 2 Thes. ii. 16. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ and God, &c.* Here the apostle asserts, that the whole of these
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pleasing epithets do belong to the Saviour, and that he is the supreme object of religious worship here addressed, and in this passage he is set before the Father, which is a plain proof of his Divinity; and the prophet Isaiah, when he was favoured with a visionary manifestation of the glory of Christ, the first born sons of light were waiting around him in posture of humble submission, with their faces veiled before his supreme effulgence. The hundred and forty four thousand, and all the listening angels now before the throne, pay divine homage to Jesus, they worship and adore him as God, and cast down their crowns of honour at his feet, crying, "Thou art worthy to receive blessing, and honour, and thanksgiving, and power, and glory, Rev. v. 12, 13." *And all the angels of God worship him, Heb. i. 6.* And the saints below worship him as God; and ascribe the whole glory of their redemption and salvation to him, if they worship him in spirit and in truth; but there is none by searching can find out God, none by all their search can find out the Divinity to perfection.

The bright, the bless'd Divinity is known
And comprehended by himself alone.

All our sight ends in his everlasting name; the divine mystery of the unsearchable Deity, we may admire and adore, though we can never fully comprehend or express it.

His worth, if all the nations knew,
Sure they would seek and love him too.

Whom

Whom have I in Heaven but thee? Is the language of every humble worshipper of Jesus, and is it not the invariable acknowledgment of every sincere worshipper in the established church in their most sacred devotion, "*I believe in ONE LORD JESUS, very GOD of very GOD, by whom all things were made.*" And the same doctrine we have abundantly confirmed by our learned divines, in the Westminster Confession of Faith; Moreover, our Lord himself proceeds to prove this point, Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.*----Hear, O Israel, it was enjoined upon them, because it is absolutely necessary to be believed, in order to salvation; men are not left to their own reasoning about this matter; the scriptures has fixed our creed, and we must abide by it, if ever we enter into life eternal, for it is very certain, there can be no salvation without it.---No Arian can ever be saved; it is impossible, for he that denies the Divinity of Christ, denies God himself,---*If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins,* John viii. 24. 1 John v. 17.

It is an awful thing to deny the Divinity of Christ. *He that denieth me,* says Christ, that is, my Divinity, my infinite Deity, my *eternal power and Godhead,* him will I deny before men and angels. It is really astonishing how men can dare to assume the christian name, who deny the Divinity of Christ; this must be treacherous dealing indeed; hereby they not only deceive themselves, but they rob the Saviour of his glory, crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame; when this *distinguishing* article of christianity is banished from our *pulpits,* and from our assemblies, *farewel* to the
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life and power of christianity; then *anticbrist* comes in like a flood. I pity from my very heart, the people who are under such a ministry; but let those deluded teachers, these false tongues, those sons of infidelity, remember,--- God, who is ever jealous of his glory, will, ere long, bring them to an account for these things. If Jesus of *Nazareth* be not truly and properly God, why are the *Arian's* baptized in his Name? Or, what can induce them to make a profession of him, and vainly call him their Saviour? If he is not God, he cannot be a Saviour, neither can he save his people from their sins; whereas, if the scripture be true, there is no other name under Heaven, whereby men can be saved, neither is there salvation in any other; so that his being exalted as a *Prince* and a *Saviour*, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins, and his saving his people with an everlasting salvation, are the most incontestible proofs of his Divinity.---To whom will those proud blasphemers liken the holy One of Israel?---To whom, saith the MIGHTY GOD, *will ye liken me?* I have often wondered what could give rise to such an unpardonable sin; for I take it to be the sin unto death spoken of 1 John v. 17. and if we turn our eyes which way we will, travel to what part of the globe we will, we may see what havock this pernicious sentiment has made among the professors of religion.---Go to the congregations of the *Arians*, there you may see what an angry God has done for their great impiety, and the dreadful blasphemy offered to his un-created excellency; he has not only given them up to strange delusions, *to believe a lie*, but he has left them,

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I had almost said, without a witness to the truth of his ineffable Divinity. A melancholy consideration indeed!----Let the ministers of light stand forth; get ye up into the sanctuary, ye servants of the most High; for Zion's sake hold not your peace; weep between the porch and the altar, ye guardians of the Saviour's flock, and say,----Spare thy people, O Lord, and give them not up to this dreadful impiety, let them never abandon thy sacred Divinity, nor draw the breath, the impious breath, that would in the least deny thee.

I have often wondered, what can be the reason why so many of our learned disputants thus mangle and torture the Divinity of Christ, in the manner they do, from their pulpits. Sometimes, I have been tempted to believe, it must be because they have no knowledge of him, because they are strangers to the true God, to his worth, his glory and his grace; otherwise they would never deny him in the manner they do; neither, indeed, is it reasonable to suppose, that a man can love and esteem a person that he never knew, and is entirely ignorant of.----Ignorance of Christ cannot beget love to him; if we have dark and confused ideas of his Divinity in our understandings, there can be no real esteem for him in our hearts. We must have some knowledge of, and esteem for the object of our worship, before proper homage can be paid. Nevertheless, it is the fashionable divinity of our corrupt age, to deny the Godhead of Christ; but such worshippers, be who they will, and every act of such worship, has no more divinity than stocks and stones. And indeed, it is impossible it should be otherwise; for
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if the heart is not fixed upon a proper object, it is set upon some idol sin, and sin has no happiness to give, its promises are all lies, and its enjoyments are all delusions. O may the Lord, the Spirit, impress those important truths upon the hearts of all my readers, and lead them in to all truth, as it is in Jesus.

I have often listened, with bleeding compassion, to the complaints of many of the humble followers of Jesus in the *North of Ireland*, who are tortured and oppressed with another gospel, by their seducing teachers, who constantly endeavour to seduce them by a strange doctrine. But I would advise them to beware of such men.—To the law and to the testimony is my final appeal. Men and brethren, *search the Scriptures*, imitate the noble *Bereans*, see whether these things be so or not. I think I may with safety venture my everlasting all on the immutable Divinity of Christ, and even pledge all my hopes, and all my claim to eternal happiness on this immoveable rock of ages, that sure foundation laid in Zion, that liveth and abideth for ever.

What could give rise to such an impious sentiment, I cannot conceive.—Suppose we should be mistaken in the *hope of Israel*, or be disappointed in our expectations; what injury can we sustain by our believing, that he is able to save to the utmost, all that come unto God by him? Can there be any evil arise from our dependence upon his immutable Divinity? By no means; but on the contrary, he that believeth not on the Son of God, hath not life, and the wrath of God abideth on him. I wish my readers were inclined to examine those sacred truths

truths with due inspection; I persuade myself, upon the closest reflection, they would have no reason to reckon the time thus spent among their lost hours;---for the Divinity of Christ is one of the noblest subjects I can treat upon, or the reader attend to. It is the standard of orthodoxy, and the doctrine of eternal life, therefore worthy of all acceptance.

Sometimes I have been ready to believe, that the great condescension of the un-created Angel of the covenant, in taking a human body, and a reasonable soul, into union with his Divine person, and, in the fulness of time, condescending to be born of the virgin, in the likeness of sinful flesh, was the leading circumstance which gave rise to the doctrine of *Arianism*, for thereby the *Messiah* became incarnate, GOD, manifest in the flesh.---the Godhead was manifest in his manhood, manifest to the angels, manifest to the shepherds, and it is manifest to all that believe; but we are not to suppose that his human nature, as to his body, or soul, pre-existed his incarnation, for, in the fulness of time he was formed in the womb of the virgin, in an extraordinary manner, and born of her; and the history which the two evangelists, *Matthew* and *Luke*, give of the MESSIAH, proves his Divinity, his eternal power and Godhead.---*Matthew* gives a legal line of Christ, shewing him to be the heir to the throne of his father *David*.---*Luke* gives the natural line of Christ; and as *Matthew* traces his genealogy down from *Abraham*, in a descending line to *Joseph*, the husband of *Mary*, the mother of *Jesus*.---*Luke* traces it upwards, in an ascending line, from *Mary* by *Joseph* up to *Adam*, to whom the

the Messiah was first promised. So that every circumstance of his conception and incarnation, proves his Divinity, and the angels which appeared to the shepherds after his nativity, gave testimony to this doctrine, Luke ii. 11. *Unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a SAVIOUR, which is CHRIST the LORD.* Thomas prefixed his seal to this doctrine; he calls him *My LORD and my GOD*; and the apostle John prefixes his seal to it in the most explicit manner, John i. 1, 2, 3, 4. *In the beginning, said that evangelical writer, was the word, and the word was God.* Every discerning reader will allow, that the word is the birth of the mind. Christ is the *essential word* that spoke for the chosen generation, before the birth of time, before the curtains of the skies were spread, or the foundations of the earth was laid; he spoke in their favour in the council and covenant peace. The blessed Jesus, in the beginning, spoke all things out of nothing, by the word of his power; he said, *Let there be light, and there was light.* He spoke with an audible voice in the constitution of the material world, when it came forth from his all-creating hand, and said, concerning the works of creation, *They are all very good.* He speaks now to his people in his word; he speaks in precious promises; that Divine person who at sundry times, and in divers manners spoke to the fathers of old, speaks by his Spirit, and by his grace to his people now; he is the interpreter of the Divine councils, and makes known to his people the way of life and salvation.----And the *word was God*, that is, the essential word, Jesus Christ was God.

He was in the beginning with God, that is, from eternity, the antient of days was with him as one brought up with him, Prov. viii. 23. He was with him when the scheme of redemption was formed, when the subjects of redemption were chosen and set apart, when their names were put into the book of life, and others left out; he was with him when the solemn transaction was settled between them both, when the *chosen generation* were given to him, committed to his care, and preserved in him, in consequence of their union to him. And the result of his appearance at the council table, was an honourable and a lasting peace concluded; justice was satisfied, the law magnified, and an everlasting righteousness compleated; and to crown the whole, God was reconciled his people accepted in the beloved, and completely justified in the Divine purpose, Eph. ii. 14. Col. i. 20. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. --- These are some of the unsearchable and adorable measures of his infinite Divinity. With what astonishment may we gaze upon this glorious mystery!

Moreover, *all things were made by him*; visible and invisible, Heaven, earth and sea, and all their created inhabitants, every living creature that was made; he is the efficient cause of it. When we consider the work of creation, and contemplate the wonders of the firmament, the sun, the moon and the stars, and all the shining hosts above, we may justly say, He is *the maker of them all*, he gave them their being and their beauty, he made them when they were not, he created the materials of which they are composed,

composed, and he moulded them into the endless multiplicity of their wonderful forms. He recovered the vessels of mercy when fallen, and redeemed them when they were lost. He upholds them, otherwise they would utterly fall into ruin. He actuates them, otherwise they would be lifeless. He supplies all their wants out of his unsearchable riches in glory; and out of his inexhaustible, immense fulness, they receive *grace for grace*; so that the whole weight of creation and providence rests upon his mighty arm, and receives the whole harmony of its motion from his unerring wisdom; in a word, all creatures do, in their way, magnify the Lord Jesus, and bear witness to his powers as their Creator, so that we are obliged to the Son in conjunction with the Father, and the everlasting Spirit, for all the blessings of nature, grace and glory; which gives an unutterable dignity to his infinite Divinity.

Without him, says the sacred writer, *was not any thing made that was made*, that is, without his knowledge, without his concurrence, without his approbation, was not any thing made that was made, therefore, said the Almighty Father to the Almighty Son, and to the Almighty Spirit, *Let us make man*, Gen. i. 26. A convincing proof of the unity of the three Divine persons in the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, and these three are one, 1 John v. 7. There is an union of council, and a perpetual concord between the un-divided three one God; there is an equality in their nature, essence, power and glory, so that there nothing made, no, not from the coarsest piece of inactive matter, up to the most exalted intelligence, but

what bears the impress of the Redeemer's fashioning skill ; therefore, from the greatness of his works, and from the operation of his hands, we cannot once doubt of his Divinity. The apostle John manifested an unwearied zeal in favour of this delightful doctrine, and adds, *In him was life*, spiritual life, Divine life, eternal life, of the same nature with the Father, and the everlasting Spirit ; and whatever operates, operates by an emanation from his all-sufficiency. He is the author and fountain of life ; temporal, spiritual and-eternal ; in him was life originally, independently, and from all eternity ; he lived before his incarnation, as *Mediator* and *Redeemer* ; and he ever liveth to make intercession for his people, therefore, he is stiled, by one of the first writers of the New Testament, *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*. He existed from all eternity as a Divine person, his goings forth were of old, and his eternal generation, as God, is super-excellent, therefore, it is called *goings-forth*, in the plural number, to shew its superior excellency ; and the apostle Paul, when speaking of the Star of Jacob, adds, *Thou Lord, in the beginning, didst lay the foundations of the earth, and the Heavens are the work of thine hands*. Heb. i. 10. He lived before the flood ; he appeared to Abraham and to Moses, in the *busb* ; neither did he pass by unnoticed the *three children* in the fiery furnace, Dan. iii. 25. Job knew this, and spoke of him. I know that my Redeemer liveth, Job xix. 25. Which was long before his appearance in our world ; and he acted upon our recovery when *Adam* and *Eve* fell, as he did upon the creation, though his human nature was then without form,
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and void of *human shape*. When darkness covered the face of the earth, he brake silence with his all-commanding voice; *Let there be light*, that was the morning of our gospel, when the *day-star* from on high first visited our dark regions, and brought life and immortality to light. It was then, our first parents were assured, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent, *and he liveth for ever*. The proofs are so plain, I am ready to lay down my pen, and proceed no farther; but I beg leave to add, that whoso honoureth not the Son, by owning and confessing him to be the true God, and eternal life, honoureth not the Father; let his profession be what it will, and his attainments be never so considerable; though he may be master of eloquence, and have the tongue of the learned, and understand all mysteries; if he denies the Divinity of Christ, he has no right to claim any pretensions to christianity. Can a person be a partaker of the Divine nature, and have Christ formed in his heart? Can he be transformed into the Divine image of Jesus, and at the same time deny his Divinity? It is all impossible. They are liars and anti-christ who deny the equality of the Father and the Son, 1 John ii. 22, 23. I have often wondered at the patience and forbearance of the supreme God, in bearing with the daring insults of his perfidious adversaries. If they were to vilify the name of an earthly king, or appear in open arms, and draw the sword against our national sovereign, they would be deemed rebels and traitors; their liberties and their properties, yea, their very lives would be forfeited for such heinous offence, and all those who presume to

villify the sacred name of the King eternal, to the meanness of a creature; who appear publickly from the pulpit, and from the press, to exert their influence against his sacred person and supreme authority, such persons are guilty of high treason against the supreme Majesty of Heaven, and the Divine law has already passed the sentence upon them, and decreed, that all such who live and die in that sin, shall never enter into the kingdom of God.

How far the Doctor's obstinacy will permit him to proceed against the King of nations, I cannot say, at present; he discovers the disposition of a traitor, and a rebel against the laws of Heaven, like the profane author of the *Theological doubts*, who has tainted the very air with his poisonous advertisements, in the publick Newspapers, and who writes without any restraint, with the most unchristian rancour, against this momentous article of the gospel; and every candid, discerning reader, who peruses that most iniquitous composition, will readily acknowledge, that his doubtful disputations, contain, what the evangelist *Mark* speaks of, --- *Blasphemy, pride, foolishness*; all these evils evidently proceed from the editor, and defile the man. And the impartial reader cannot but look upon his pernicious composition, with the most contemptuous pity. --- Had his doubts arisen from any religious conviction, from beholding in any new and favourable light the doctrine of Divine revelation, and an eminent faithful minister of it, in the North of Ireland, which he has lately made the object of his derision; then, perhaps, they would have been no less respectable in the

estimation of the world. F 3a line for so esteem

esteem of all judicious persons. But it is manifest from the contents, and consequences of his blasphemous production, that his chief end and design, is to vilify the Saviour's exalted name, person and government; nevertheless, the Redeemer will have a seed to serve him, a generation that shall call him blessed. Though the *Arians* are ignorant of him, and the *Socinians* acknowledge him not, yet he will be glorious in the eyes of all his faithful followers, and precious to all that believe in his name.

I think I have said enough on this subject to determine the Divine nature of the second Adam, and the union of the three Divine persons in the Godhead; and since our salvation depends upon the knowledge and belief of these truths, how careful should persons be in their enquiry after them, lest they should be deceived; a mistake here, would be of the last importance; but the Son of God is an hiding-place from the storm and tempests, a sure unfailing refuge, a rock of defence, a shield, a sure foundation, and an everlasting inheritance for the righteous, to trust in at all times; these are the winning titles the Messiah assumes, and to which he always answered; therefore the expectations of his people cannot be disappointed; and those sacred titles evidently prove, that his *name* is Divine, and above every name on earth, and in Heaven; that his *nature* is Divine, that his *offices*, his covenant, his word and promise, his gifts of graces, and especially, his love shed abroad in the heart, are all Heavenly and Divine; and if the attributes and perfections of the Almighty Saviour are Divine, what must the Divine original be?

Tell us, ye despisers of the strength of Israel, who assume the character of divines, if men were to rob you of your sacred titles, or even omit the signature of reverence on the superscription of your letters, would it not incur your displeasure?—And will ye rob the Saviour of his Divinity, whose uncreated name is *holy and reverend*? Psalm cxi. 3. Rather let your tongues cleave to the roof of your mouths, than employ them in such dreadful blasphemy; and thereby lead precious souls to eternal ruin.----Keep not silence ye watchmen of Israel, awake ye sluggish souls, and put your gospel armour on, it is more than time for you to declare among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ; go tell the world, *that he is the true God, and eternal life*, 1 John v. 20. Let the ministers of darkness spread all their baits, to seduce deluded mortals to ruin; let them cast in the scale all their *arts and sciences*, their natural philosophy, and their wild imaginations of boasted reason, against the Divinity of Christ; what will this avail them? It will be no more than briars and thorns before a consuming fire; it is all unsubstantial, and light as vanity.----*I will destroy them together, saith the Lord of hosts.*

S E C T. XI.

Observations on the Satisfaction of the Death of Christ.

WHAT is yet more astonishing, it is not enough for these *sons of infidelity* to deny the Divinity of our supreme Lord, but they must profane his sacrifice, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, Heb. x. 29. denying

denying the atonement and satisfaction of his death;---Asserting that he died only as an example, and as a testimony to his doctrine, which I think is one of the most horrid doctrines that ever reached the ears of sinful men.---This is making the cross of Christ of none effect, and destroying the grace in which we stand; whereas the death and sufferings of Christ, is the source of all our consolation and joy; the doctrine of the cross, is the glory of our religion, and the only foundation of the believers hope for eternal life; and the consideration of his being set forth and fore-ordained a propitiation for the sins of his people, is the foundation of all our comfort, Rom. iii. 25. This important doctrine was opened to the patriarchs of old, with the very eye-lids of the morning, and it has a place among the decrees of eternity, for the sufferings and death of Christ was fore-known, and fore-ordained. The punishment due to his people fell upon him, by his own choice, in pursuance of a council and purpose agreed to, before the birth of time, and this is one of the secrets of God, among his invisible mysteries, which is revealed to his people by the agency of the Divine Spirit.

But the question under consideration is, What was the distinguishing and favourite article that Christ had in view, when he made his soul an offering for sin; when he endured his bitter agonies, and his bloody sweats; when he was taken from prison and from judgment, and led as a lamb to the slaughter; when he endured the cross, and bowed his princely head, and gave up the ghost?---Was all this only for our example, that we should follow his steps in these
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his bitter sufferings; this cannot be, for when he was first apprehended by Judas and the band of officers, the *all-sufficient Redeemer* said to his adversaries, if ye seek me, let those go their way, John viii. 8. Christ was not willing that his people should share with him, of the bitter cup of his sufferings; he loved them too well to have them undergo the sufferings due to their sins. I admit his whole life was an example of humility and unspotted purity; there was no guile in him, and that we should learn of him, and copy after his lovely pattern, this we readily admit, and thus we teach. But that he was only an example in his sufferings and death, I confess, is beyond my power to conceive, or to make sense of it. That he died is most certain, but to say, that he died merely as our example, is *ridiculous*; and if any of my readers should be solicitous to know for whom he died, I beg leave to answer, it was not for himself, Rom. v. 8. it was for the household of faith; for the whole family of God, in earth and in Heaven, it was for those who are his, whom the Father had given to him, John vi. 37. his children, his charge, his peculiar treasure; and if the scripture be true, it was for their sins, Isa. liii. 8. not for their example. I wish our reverend gentlemen would explain to their hearers, how the death of Christ was for their example. Does not an example signify a thing to be imitated and copied after? But did ever the illustrious Sufferer require any of his disciples to participate of his sufferings? Very far from it.---So far was the sufferings of Christ from being an example to his people, that he died to deliver them from suffering death. He suffered, that they

they might go free, he suffered; the just for the unjust, to bring them to God. I admit that Christ was their substitute; but is there no difference between a substitute and an example? Between the price of our redemption, and the example of our Redeemer? Is there no difference between the life and death of Christ? I think there is, for he lived a holy life, but he died a shameful and a most ignominious death; so that if his death be only for our example, it must be a shameful example. It is really astonishing to think, what pitiful shifts many of our reverend divines make, for want of *new* words to set forth their *new* doctrine. Are they masters of arts and sciences, and versed in the rules of *logic* and natural *philosophy*, and knoweth not these things? As there is a material difference between the subject and the predicate, so there certainly is a difference between the influence of the Saviour's life, and the efficacy of his death.

The redemption of his people, body and soul, was the result of the Saviour's death; this was the distinguishing article he had in view, when he undertook the arduous work of man's salvation. For this purpose he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, there was a model of glory laid in the sufferings and death of Christ, that will out-shine the creation, and out-live the world. When the Heavens and the earth are passed away, he will reserve a memorial of his sufferings to all generations. --- I was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities, will be the language of the Redeemer concerning his people, to all eternity; so that the sufferings and death of Christ, instead of being merely for an example, abounds with light and comfort to his chosen,

chosen; there is not the shadow of a cloud upon this delightful doctrine; it is full of grace and truth.---*By his stripes we are healed*, is the invariable language of every believer. But if all the angels in Heaven, and all the men upon earth, had been offered up as a sacrifice for sin, it would have been of no avail to the vessels of mercy. A finite creature could never make infinite satisfaction to the justice of God; none but the surety of God's elect; he made peace by the blood of his cross. From what I have offered on the death of Christ, let the reader judge what the Saviour died for; whether for an example, or as a Redeemer; which leads me to take some notice of the testimony, which our modern divines say, his death gave to his doctrine.

I have already observed to my readers, that the death of Christ was ignominious and shameful. The death of the cross was enough to startle all mankind; to see a person going out of the world, disesteemed by men, and forsaken by God; to see a person spit upon, crowned with thorns, pierced, and loaded with ignominy and reproach, crying out, in the bitter agonies of unexpressive grief, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*. To see him expire under every torment of body, and anguish of soul.---Surely, such a testimony as this, to confirm a doctrine, must have a very unfavourable aspect; indeed, had he gone off as *Stephen* did, with extacy of joy; or had the bright guardians of the just attended him in his lingering moments, from *mount calvary*, till he had gained the top of the everlasting hills; had he ascended the unknown and trackless *ether* as *Elijah* did, in a fiery chariot, it might have put a favourable

vourable gloss upon their *new tradition*; But his passing through the gloomy territories of death, in the way to his throne, with every formidable look of horror; the aspect must be dreadful; to hear him, in his expiring agonies, cry out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Such a testimony must, I think, rather astonish and terrify the beholders, than afford them any satisfaction, so that such a notion must be contrary both to scripture and reason.

If the death of Christ was only for an example, and to confirm his doctrine, I beg leave to ask our masters in Israel, to what purpose do they frequent the Lord's-Supper in both its parts? Is it to commemorate his *example* and *doctrine* as often as they do it? Or is it to commemorate his *death* till he come? May he who has the residue of the Spirit, send him to take away ignorance from every unbeliever of this doctrine, for happy are all they who thus believe, and live in him; they have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. All that I shall say more at present, on this subject, is, that when the doctrine of atonement is denied; wherever the death and satisfaction of Christ is rejected; the man of sin comes in like a flood. I shall close this section, with the words of a learned divine in the North of Ireland, "Christ proved his doctrine by his miracles, but his death could only prove that he was in earnest, and the reality of his pretensions is demonstrated by his resurrection from the dead. Without this, his death could not prove the truth of his doctrines, for at this rate *Atheism* must be true, or the right sentiment, because Cæsar Vanini died a martyr for that absurd opinion." SECT.

*Observations on Mr. Walter Richards Answer
to Dr. Blair.*

IN the former part of this work I have protested against some of the Doctor's errors; nevertheless, I most readily justify him in some particulars, wherein Mr. Richards has misrepresented his sentiments, and grievously evaded the force of the Doctor's arguments.

The Dr. in his fore-cited composition, took occasion to set forth certain errors in the *church of Rome*, represented in scripture under the character of a woman, comprized in that sublime passage, Rev. xvii. 4. this sentiment not coming within the reach of that reverend gentleman's abilities, he charges the Dr. of bearing hard upon the *fair sex*, and pronounces, they will never forgive him, whereas there is not a single sentence in the whole paragraph, that reflects the least indignity on the *modest fair*. What could induce Mr. Richards thus to expose his folly, I cannot conceive; but we will hope it was not an intentional misrepresentation, for the editor acknowledges in his preface, page 5, that he has not, knowingly, evaded the force of the Doctor's arguments; therefore, we may conclude, it was not an intentional mistake, but rather a deficiency in the author's understanding. For my part, I must confess, I expected Mr. Richards would have answered the Dr. in a more eligible manner; at least, that he would have aimed at the mark, which the gentleman

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of refinement, and the author of genius, should ever keep in view; but his failure has been so conspicuous, that a person, with the dim light of nature, may easily perceive it. The Dr. stumbles at the Divinity of Christ, and his opponent stumbles at the mystery of Babylon. It would be well if those dim-sighted writers would follow the advice of a celebrated philosopher; "To be silent as learners, that they may learn to be teachers," which leads me to

S E C T. XIII.

Observations on the impropriety of the Phrase, the Merits of Christ.

THE Dr. ascertains, "That merit is a quality not applicable to God, he is above merit, for no being can have merit in acting conformable to his own will."

Here I think the Dr. has discovered the author of genius; every sentence reflects honour to the editor, and which, I think, every person of refinement will admire; but Mr. Richards objects to the above sentiment, and informs the publick, "If the word *merit*, has any meaning, it is the virtuous state of a free intelligent mind, with the actions consequent upon it, which makes it our duty to give praise."

Was ever a philosopher so bewildered and mistaken about the import of the word *merit*, if it has any meaning? Can the phrase admit any supposition or doubt, which carries the appearance of the greatest truth? Did Mr. Richards

ards never read, or did he never know, that the word *merit* has a meaning, and generally signifies to *deserve*, and with the greatest propriety may be applied to men, who frequently *merit* honour and esteem from their fellow mortals, on account of their valour and fidelity; but this can by no means be applicable to the supreme God, for he is as far above *merit*, as the Heavens are above the earth, and exalted far above all blessing and praise, Neh. ix. 5.

I acknowledge, the phrase, the *merits of Christ*, frequently occurs in many valuable compositions, and it is frequently used by many able divines, of manifold denominations, in their publick and solemn devotions; but when it is applied to the *second Person* of the adorable Trinity, I think it is extremely wrong, because it offers great indignity to the glory of the great Redeemer. I have sometimes met the phrase in the writings of the learned and pious Mr. Hervey, who, nevertheless, acknowledges it to be a phrase of dubious import, which he can by no means admire. See *Aspasio vin.* page 35. I beg leave to appeal to the learned prelates of our national church, and other divines of the most dignified characters, if ever they met the phrase, either in the Old or New Testaments; I am sure it was never mentioned by any of the prophets or apostles, and therefore ought not to be used in our solemn assemblies, especially as it detracts from the dignity and glory of the all-sufficient Saviour, and ascribes that glory to the creature, which alone is due to the Creator.

I submit to the determination of the impartial reader, whether the thing merited or deserved,

ed, does not suppose something that was not originally the persons own, but another's, and what he has not yet acquired, which necessarily conveys the idea of deficiency and dependance in the person to whom it is applicable;----and suppose we admit the phrase to be applicable to Jesus, what can the fair original of all that is lovely be said to merit or deserve, that he was not possessed of, before the birth of time, and before the foundations of the hills were laid?

For the readers satisfaction, I shall dwell a few moments upon the enquiry. What can the great *Unknown* be said to merit, who has pleasures yet untasted, flowing from his right hand, and fountains of living water, where numberless millions of happy spirits quench their infinite desires, and regale themselves with the pure streams that run for ever fresh, and which eternal ages can never diminish?----Let but reason speak, and it will answer, that we may as soon question the Redeemer's existence, as question any deficiency in him, and if there was any want or emptiness in him; if there was any room left for desire, or any thing perfect beyond himself; if he was not a present help to his afflicted people in all their times of need;-----then indeed we may wander from the fountain, for broken cisterns, and leave the *ocean*, for shallow streams; but when there is no want in him, when *he filleth all in all*, what can he be said to merit or deserve? Was it ever known that the stream rose higher than the fountain head? Or, was Almighty strength ever diminished? When it can, then, and not till then, can he be said to *merit*. And admit this was the case; from whom can the strength of Israel *merit*?

Is it from the Father, and the everlasting Spirit? This cannot be, since he is equal with them, neither can he merit from angels, or sinful men. ---Indeed such a tenet may suit the *Arians*, who depreciate the immutable Divinity to the inferiority of a creature; and if this blasphemous tenet could once be proved, then the *Rock of ages* may be said to merit from the Father; but are we *Arians*? I hope there are many pious souls into whose hands these may come, who will readily join with me, in extolling the Saviour far above merit.

I own, I have sometimes heard men of learning and piety, speak much of the *merits* of Christ; and I have listened to the uncertain, unsatisfying sound, with a silent confusion, because it cannot be supported by Divine authority, for his un-created excellencies must be diminished, before he can be said to merit any addition, --- Tell me, ye masters of *arts* and *sciences*, if you can, what Omnipotent fulness can merit? Is it riches and honour, dominion and power, things present and things to come, visible and invisible; is it grace and glory? The oracles of Heaven puts this matter out of all doubt, and assures us, *That in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*; and the same evangelical writer adds, --- *It hath pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*. Moreover, he was anointed above his fellows, and received the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34. therefore it must be, not only a contradiction, but also an impossibility, for Omnipotent fulness to merit or deserve what he was originally possessed of. --- Who can say to the Almighty, *One thing thou lackest*? --- What account

count our protestant divines can give for such indignity offered to the Almighty Saviour, I cannot conceive.

If we dare speak it to an earthly *monarch*, would it not offer great indignity to majesty, to tell him, that he *merits* or deserves liberty for his lawful subjects, and pardon for offending rebels, when it is his royal prerogative, to give his subjects liberty, and his royal clemency, to forgive traitors to his crown and dignity? How much more must it reflect indignity to the King eternal, to assert, that he *merits* liberty and forgiveness for his lawful captives; when it is his royal prerogative, to make his people free, and his royal clemency, to forgive offending mortals; which he does freely, for his own *Name's sake*, not for his *merits sake*; in consequence of which, the Father is said to be *well pleased* with them in Christ; -----Not for his *merits sake*, but for his *righteousness sake*. Moreover, they are said to have redemption through his blood; not through his merits; and the forgiveness of sins, through the riches of grace, not through the merits of Christ. The scriptures are very clear and explicit upon this point, without a double meaning, and assures us, that by the *obedience* of Christ, many are made righteous, not by the *merits* of Christ; and by his *stripes* we are healed, not by his *merits*. The sacred writers were very careful never to mention the phrase.

I acknowledge, many of my brethren in the ministry, of manifold denominations, and of superior abilities, have made use of the phrase in their publick and solemn devotions, for a long series of years, without any design of deviating from

from the sacred oracles of truth, or depreciating the un-created glories of the Son of God. Some *divines* have assured me, by the *merits* of Christ, they mean the virtue and efficacy of his sufferings and death, and what he obtained thereby.

----Here I would wish to detain the reader's attention for a few moments, while I offer my thoughts on this particular.----I admit, the strength of Israel and the Saviour thereof, by his sufferings and death, obtained eternal redemption for his people, and thereby he purchased the church of God, Acts xx. 28. And this was what the promised Messiah had in view, when he gave his life a ransom for them; therefore they are called to this day, *the purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14.----But is there no difference between meriting a possession, and purchasing of it? What else can be the meaning of these pathetic expressions, *Ye are bought with a price*? How can this be if they are merited? Would it not be an evident contradiction of terms to say, that they are *merited* with a *price*? If this be good sense, if it is consistent with sound philosophy, with religion or reason, I am greatly mistaken.

I confess, it would give me sacred pleasure, if any thing my pen can produce, should assist the reader in his enquiry on this subject. It was the opposition which has of late been made to this sentiment, gave me occasion to search further into it. I own, some persons may merit a possession in the *church*, by their obliging manners, and liberal attainments; others may merit a possession in the state, by their valour and fidelity, which supposes, it was what they had not originally; but this can by no means be applicable

plicable to the original of all fulness, the *high Priest* of our profession, and the *fore-runner* of his people. Though he was incomparable and indefatigable in promoting his Father's glory on earth, he did not *merit* the chosen generation, nor a place in their hearts, neither did he merit, or purchase any blessings for them; these were all provided for their supply, before the birth of time, in the everlasting covenant of grace, and laid up in him, who is the *Angel of the covenant*, and the *Head of all*. Let us hear what the great *Orator* of all the nations of the earth proclaims on this subject.----*Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?* Deut. xxxii. 34. And the beneficent Giver of every good gift, in due time, freely bestows these blessings on them; and his infinite goodness can never be diminished, whatever blessings his generous hand communicates to his people; endless liberality cannot in the least diminish his fulness; the streams may sooner roll back to their fountain, and the course of nature be reversed, rather than the original of all existence can fail, or be said to *merit* or want means to bring his purposes to pass; his glory admits of no addition; the praises of angels cannot *beigh-*
en it, nor all the powers of darkness *diminish* it; therefore it is impossible that he can *merit*. Indeed if his hand was shortened that he could not save, or if his ear was heavy, that he could not hear; if the springs of his bounty were sealed up, and his perpetual beneficence was but once impoverished, then we should have some cause to believe the doctrine of merit; but while the fountain continues undiminished, it must be disingenuous to the highest degree, and I had al-
most

most said inexcusable, to espouse such a superstitious tenet; indeed if he was as man; that he could repent, or if he had promised any thing beyond his power to perform; then his faithfulness would be uncertain, and his goodness would be precarious; but are those infinite perfections for which we adore him, imaginary? Was there ever any breach of truth, or want of grace, in the God of truth?

Witness ye *crystal streams*; Was the fountain ever dry? Ye *gaping furrows*, Did ye ever thirst in vain; did ever seed time and harvest fail? Ye *silent groves*, Did ever the sun forget to shine, or the Heavens withhold their enlivening showers? Ye saints of his, ye ministers that do his pleasure, I call you all to witness;---- Did the *Highest* ever forfeit his honour, or break his promise?----Is there any deficiency in the *pearl* of great price? Did his mercy, in one single instance, ever fail? Have the records of his actions ever been stained with any breach of his word; if not, how can he be said to merit?----Can he who is greater than *Jonah*, wiser than *Solomon*, fairer than the children of men, the chiefest among ten thousand, and *altogether lovely*, know any deficiency?----It is all impossible. What failure have our clergy found in the hope of Israel, or what deficiency can they charge him with, that they dwell so extravagantly on the *merits* of Christ? It was but the other day, I heard a celebrated orator, from the pulpit, declare, that there is a fulness of *merit* in Christ, and a redundancy of *merit* in him. For my part, I confess I am at a loss to conceive what our speakers and writers mean by this ambiguous mode of speech; they might as well

well say, that there is a redundancy of deservings in Christ; but how would such inconsistent expressions grate upon the ears of a discerning audience.----I admit, there is a fulness of wisdom, power, righteousness and strength, and a fulness of all grace, treasured up in him, and all the fulness of the Godhead; but there is as great a difference between the perfections of his grace, and that *popish* tenet *merit*, as there is between darkness and light; indeed were I to attend *mass*, I should not wonder to hear the doctrine of *merit*, for it is one of the main pillars of the Romish church, it was taught very early by the *monks* in their absolution, and the monkish form runs in the following words unto this day.

“ God forgive thee, my brother. The *merits* of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the *merits* of the blessed Virgin Mary, the *merit* of all the saints, and the merit of thy own order, the strictness of thy religion, the good works which thou hast done, and shalt do, shall be availed with a reward thro’ the *merits* of Christ.”

What a deal of superstitious trumpery is here, and *merit* is the principal criterial.----But do we, my brethren, stand upon the same principles; are we called protestants, and do we depart from the protestant doctrine; I am sorry to speak it, but our *popish* adversaries can tell the world, with an air of triumph, of the increase of the doctrine of merit in most of our assemblies.----If we are non-conformists in principle, let us not be conformists in practice.----It would be well if the learned prelates of our national church, who protest against popery, would stand

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at a distance from this *superstitious tenet*, introduced into the Romish church by Pope Gregory the eighth;---and as to my brethren of the Protestant Dissenting denominations, I sincerely wish they would neither touch, nor taste, nor handle, in their pulpits, this *vain tradition*, which defiles the temple of our God, defiles his sacred worship, and offers the greatest indignity to the supreme Object of Divine adoration. Perhaps some of the Romish clergy, will be ready to imagine, that I am too severe upon them, that I have mangled one of the main pillars of their church, at a very unmerciful rate; it may be so, for I protest against it; as much as I do against Popery; and I hope my Protestant brethren of every denomination, will learn the impropriety of the phrase, from the pen of one, who is less than the least among them; and if I have touched any of my brethren to the quick; or put any of them to pain, by treating on this subject, I do assure them it is not by way of ostentation, or to find fault, but rather to make way for a cure; to purge our assemblies from the reliicks of Popery.

And suppose it was possible for Him who is the first and the last, and the great spring of all existence, to merit or deserve; who are the objects of the Creator's dependance; are they angels or sinful men? 'Tis true, Mr. Richards ascertains, that God "*merits* from his creatures some good, honour, and esteem, and that he deserves to be recompensed by them, if that were possible." But where he met with this *trumpery*, I cannot conceive, unless in the school of *Arminius*. I confess, if I had not some knowledge of the *editor*, I should suspect that he was
tinctured

tintured, deeply tintured with the superstitions
 of the church of Rome.----Does God merit im-
 possibilities from his creatures; does he merit
 from them what they neither have, nor ever
 will be able to perform? Amazing stupidity!----
 Have Mr. Richards forgot, or did he never know,
 that man cannot be profitable to his Maker,
 and how he can suppose that an Almighty sove-
 reign, who is immensely rich, and whose riches
 are unsearchable, can merit from insolvent men,
 I cannot conceive.----Can infinite, merit from fi-
 nite?----Can perfection, merit from imperfection?
 Is it possible for infallible wisdom, to merit
 from mere folly; or un-created excellency, merit
 from a lump of impurity?----Can the fountain
 merit from the streams; or the tree merit from
 the fruit? No more can an infinitely holy God,
 merit from unholy men; it cannot be; it is all
 impossible; neither can he merit from his minist-
 ring angels, for he charges them with com-
 parative folly, and all their dependance centers
 alone in him.

I persuade myself, every discerning reader
 will allow, that all men owe a debt of grati-
 tude to their Maker, and if so, they must pay
 their debts, before they can boast of any thing
 worthy of Divine merit; and how finite beings
 can make a recompense to God, to whom they
 are so greatly indebted, when they have no-
 thing to pay, I cannot conceive; and admit they
 had, a debt of sin will never be discharged by
 a debt of obedience; since God has a prior
 right to the latter, therefore it is impossible that
 God can merit from any of his creatures; nei-
 ther can the best of men make a recompense to
 him for their manifold transgressions; this was a
 surety's

Merit's work; and he made recompense to God for the sins of his people, by his sufferings and death; not merited it; therefore, says the prophet Isaiah,---He bare the sins of many,---and made reconciliation for iniquity, Dan. ix. 24. not merited it; or as it is otherwise illustrated by that divine philosopher Paul---Having made peace through the blood of his cross, Col. i. 2. but not through the merits of his cross.---Merit could never magnify the law, nor make it honourable, neither could it make satisfaction to Divine justice; *Without the shedding of blood there is no remission*; whereas, if *merits* would have been sufficient, his invaluable life might have been spared; and if there was any thing in the best of men worthy of Divine merit, then they would be more pure than their Maker, and have whereof to glory; whereas they have nothing to boast of, but nothingness and vanity. *Therefore, if we have peace with God, it is through our Lord Jesus Christ, not through his merits. If the saints are divinely fair and comely in his eyes, it is through his comeliness put upon them, not through his merits; and if ever they are saved, it will be through rich grace, not through the merits of Christ, and the language of the listening millions now before the throne, is, Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, not by thy merits. It is needless for me to expatiate any longer on the import of the phrase, merit: I have given my sentiments at large on the subject, and readily acquiesce with the Dr. See his page 134 Merit is an inferior virtue, only applicable to men. I should not have abused the readers patience on this particular,* had

had not Mr. Richards taken so much pains to pervert the meaning of the word, and at last he leaves the reader in anxious suspense. And concludes, "Let this pass." But how that reverend gentleman can expect the discerning reader will let *counterfeit* pass for *sterling*, or *chaff* pass for *wheat*, I cannot conceive, for my part, I shall leave it with the reader, and proceed to my second volume.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

